

L. C. Bridgema

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE;

OR

MEMOIRS OF

MRS. MENVILLE.

1607/2083.

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OF

MEMOIR OF

MRS. JENN VILLI



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MRS. MENVILLE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By Mrs. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF ERRORS OF EDUCATION, MISS MEREDITH,
AND INTRIGUES OF A MORNING.

VOL. IV.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

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MRS. MINNIE L.

A WOMAN

IN FOUR VOLUMES

BY MRS. PARSONS

AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF MRS. PARSONS," "THE MEXICAN
AND THE WOMAN OF A WOMAN."

VOLUME

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W O M A N

AS SHE

SHOULD BE.

LETTER I.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I HAVE your letter, my dear proud friend; how much am I deceived in you; I thought you meek, complaisant, and obliging; no! you resist the entreaties of your Charlotte; "you are rich," doubtless, "very rich," and superior to the power or will to oblige those who love you; well, pursue, observe, those fastidious notions which mortify your friends, and by mortifying *yourself*, gratify your enemies. You must do as you

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B

please,

please, and I must submit to your arbitrary determination. I lay down my pen, my mind is disturbed, and I cannot at present go on. My dear Mrs. Menville, forgive me, I believe I am too petulant, I am a spoiled child, and cannot bear to be crossed in my wishes, but your superior wisdom shall controul my impatience ; you promise, when you want assistance, you will apply to me ; I *depend on that promise* ; I think worlds would not bribe you to break your word when once given, on that I rely.

I have much to tell you, I am the friend, the confidant of Donna Antonia ; I am grieved for her ; “ What is more terrible than a hopeless love ? ” *her's* is such for Harley—she no longer affects to mislead me, she owns her partiality, though confident it never can be returned.

“ I esteem, I love him,” said she, “ why should I seek to hide from others, what I cannot conceal from myself ? my dear lady,
pity



pity me ; the completion of our own wishes is often our severest punishment ; I was the first to desire, to entreat, you would stay longer at Spa, I now find I did wrong ; every day adds strength to my pre-possession. I call to mind what you told me, his attachment to another lady, but that lady is married, his attachment cannot continue now ; he is an Heretic, *should* he feel a regard for me, my father, my friends never will consent to such an union, and without it, portionless and reprobated, I have too much pride ever to be his. Dear madam, instruct me, tell me what I must do to conquer this partiality, to regain tranquillity, and re-obtain the love of my sister, and my own esteem ?”

I embraced the lovely girl, I applauded her sentiments, her heroism ; I thought it behoved me to speak plainly, without mentioning names I related to her your whole story, and developed Captain Harley's sentiments. She heard me with strict attention. When I stopped,

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE.

“ Dear Lady Wentworth, how good you are, what an angel is your friend, what a lesson have you taught me? she sacrificed her inclinations to oblige her family; shall the dutiful Antonia do less? no, I will subdue my affection, I will no longer entertain sentiments repugnant to the wishes of my father; if I cannot immediately marry the man of his choice, I will no longer harden my mind against him; I will judge him fairly, I will try to do justice to his merits, and if possible, overcome the reluctance I feel to oblige my family. Yet the assassination, can that be pardonable? Can the mind be good where such evil designs predominate? dear Lady Wentworth, pity me, pray for me, indeed I will try to emulate your angelic friend.”

I was greatly affected; I assured her I esteemed her infinitely; that she was one of the first of women, and would, I was confident, succeed in her endeavours, to be a pattern to her sex. I saw she was gratified by
my

my praises, and I am sure, from the natural greatness and generosity of mind she possesses, will get the better of a passion which meets no return.

I am uneasy about Mrs. Neville, she submitted to the loss of her husband, after the first violent emotions of grief were subsided, with as much fortitude as we could well expect; she even began to be cheerful, but within these last three weeks, she is grown melancholy, reserved, pale and unhappy. I have spoken to her on the subject, I can obtain no information, she evades my questions, and asks in return,

“Has she not cause to be unhappy; about to return to a country, without friends or connexions, where she was once blest with so many?”

“Perhaps then, Mrs. Neville, you would prefer living abroad?”

"What, madam, when Captain Harley and you are going to England? no, without your society I must be wretched indeed!"

I said no more, but I am persuaded some secret grief preys upon her mind, and I sincerely pity her. She is cold and distant to the Ossuana family, and generally declines their invitations; Mr. Sackville appears to be her greatest favourite, and he is evidently partial to *her*; being unhappy, is a sufficient claim upon his regard.

I am delighted with, though grieved for, your amiable St. Bernard, her fate is a severe one, to be the victim of avarice and false conjectures, but she has a dignity of mind, and a resignation, which will, I doubt not, make her easy, though not happy in her profession; tell her I love her for her kindness to my friend. Was I not thoroughly acquainted with the strength of your principles, I should think you in danger of being converted, but I can judge candidly of the
Catholic

Catholic faith, as well as yourself; I see and know many very amiable persons of that persuasion, and have no doubt but local situations form our principles of religion; for born in France or Spain, we had assuredly been Catholics. The Count's family, drawing their first breath, and receiving their education in England, would in all probability have been Protestants. The good and pious of all different persuasions, I love and admire, and despise the narrow contracted heart, which admits of no worth, no salvation, out of their own church. Antonia is the most charitable Catholic I have ever met with; she admires merit wherever she meets with it, without considering what their religion may be: not so Isabella, she is a bigot, haughty, reserved, and looks with a contemptuous pity on heretics; as unhappy beings, on the verge of destruction through their own folly.

I am really grown wonderful fond of Spa, we have most agreeable parties; the Du-

chefs of C—— engages every heart, by her affability and sweetness; how engaging is that winning condescension in persons of high rank; they ought indeed to be *above* being proud; they may condescend to bestow distinction, they can receive none from others, but they may enjoy the love, the admiration of every body, they may obtain a reputation, worth a thousand hours, sacrificed to pride and an assumed superiority over others. Here are likewise several foreign ladies of distinction, whose pleasant manners and natural vivacity, greatly enliven our parties; would to heaven you were with us. The Count and his daughters are just come in, I must attend them; heaven preserve you my dear and amiable friend, may you soon be restored to happiness, and your friends anxious wishes.

Believe me ever your's,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER II.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HOW unluckily and accidentally am I thrown into fresh embarrassments ! this morning a young English lady, a pensioner, was sitting with me, when one of the nuns came to tell her, a gentleman, a relation of her's, was at the grate, and requested to see her, having letters from her family ; Miss Southwell begged me to accompany her to the parlour ; how I came to comply with her request, I know not, as I had made it a point not to see any company ; but so it was,

B 5

I followed

I followed her, and on coming into the parlour, who should I see at the grate but Lord Longfield. Our surprise was mutual.

"Mrs. Menville," exclaimed his Lordship, "this is fortunate indeed!"

"You are acquainted then," said Miss Southwell, with a smile.

"I have the honour of knowing his Lordship," I replied, "we were once neighbours in the country."

"I hope my dear madam," said he, a little recovered, "I hope you are well, and your sweet little girl?"

"We are both perfectly well, and I am happy to see your Lordship in the same desirable situation."

With a low courtesy, and before Miss Southwell could prevent me, I hastily quitted

ted the parlour, exceedingly mortified, that chance should have thrown me in the way of seeing him, for if, by any accident, Lord Longfield's visit to this convent should be known to Mr. Menville, nothing, I dare say, would persuade him to believe otherwise, than that he was acquainted with my retirement. When Miss Southwell returned, I was in tears.

“ God bless me, dear madam, what is the matter; how is it that my cousin and you are both so shocked and grieved at this accidental interview ?”

Unable to explain such delicate circumstances to her, as caused my distress, I only replied,

“ That his Lordship having been acquainted with my husband, and known me in happier days, his presence, which I did not expect, had reminded me of those situa-

tions which I could not reflect on without pain."

She looked, I thought, incredulous, and eyed me with an unfavourable and suspicious air, spoke very little, and soon left me.

"Is it not very unfortunate for me, to be thus thrown in the way of a man, whom of all others I would avoid; yet unconscious as he is of being an object of jealousy—jealousy! no, I retract the word, jealousy implies some degree of affection; suspicion is the proper epithet for Mr. Menville's ideas; not knowing then that Mr. Menville thought indifferently of him, he must think my behaviour very strange and unpolite, yet I could not act otherwise. This vexatious circumstance shall be a lesson to me, not to venture near the grate again."

Madam St. Bernard has just been with me, she said, Miss Southwell mentioned in full class to her dear mother, Mrs. Menville's

ville's confusion and strange behaviour, at seeing her cousin, and that during the little time he stayed, he asked many questions, and desired she would pay particular attention to Mrs. Menville; in short, said the malicious girl,

“ One would think there was a love affair between them, and very like her husband placed her in a convent whilst he is abroad, to prevent their seeing each other.”

“ Fye, Miss Southwell,” said mother St. Paul, “ you should never hazard such ungenerous conjectures; Mrs. Menville conducts herself with great propriety, and I dare answer for it, she is perfectly free from an improper attachment to any body.”

The girl put up her lip at the rebuke, and Madame St. Bernard fears she will do me great prejudice in the convent.

“ Yet

“ Yet why should she, I have never offended her, nor was there any thing so very extraordinary in my behaviour to his Lordship.”

I was, however, so much affected, that my amiable friend shed tears of sympathy over me, and fearful that *she* too might entertain unfavourable suspicions, I very frankly acquainted her with every circumstance of my life; she embraced me with the warmest affection.

“ I was sure I could not be deceived,” said she, “ the very first moment I saw you, that ingenuous countenance spoke a good heart; we may be prejudiced in favour of beauty, without doubt, but in Mrs. Menville’s face, the leading character was frankness and sincerity; I pride myself on my discernment. Dearest madam, take comfort, be assured you will one day be rewarded for your patient obedience to a prejudiced and
and

and ill-advised man ; you will yet be an ornament, a bright example to the world."

My dear Lady Wentworth, how soothing is eulogy from a friend ! how does it stimulate a feeling mind to deserve it, and that in compliment to the judgment of that friend, as well as for our own advantage. I will not be disturbed at any thing this talkative girl says, my conduct shall disapprove her malicious conjectures.

Your second letter is this moment brought to me ; I congratulate you on the agreeable addition to your parties, but I am entirely unacquainted with the Count and his daughters. Mrs. Colemore mentioned nothing of her correspondence with Captain Harley, to me. Scrupulous, with respect to the delicacy I thought necessary to observe, after I became Mr. Menville's wife, I chose not to hear any particulars relative to Captain Harley ; yet you see I could not escape censure ; the intercourse between them was known,
and

and I was supposed to be concerned in it—I am happy, however, in being able to acquit myself.

From what you think of Antonia, I should imagine, if the article of religion can be dispensed with, she might prove a very desirable wife for Captain Harley; I should rejoice to hear he was married to an amiable woman, such as you describe that lady; pray let me hear further particulars relative to the family; I am already warmly prejudiced in favour of the eldest daughter; perhaps bella may be equally estimable, but having more of the Spanish manners about her, that gravity and reserve do not recommend her to the esteem of the English; yet we ought to allow for local prejudices, and different modes of education, and doing that, the cheerful openness of Antonia's manners are more to be wondered at, than the habitual gravity of Isabella's, which perhaps may not be tinged by ill-nature or pride either. I suppose, when I next hear
from.

from you, it will be from London; may gentle gales soon waft you to your native shore; may your journey be productive of health, peace and pleasure, and may your worthy friends live to rejoice in your felicity! My grateful and best respects to all.

I am ever,

my dear Lady Wentworth,

your affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I Have strange news for you my dear Mrs. Menville. Two days ago your brother Anthony unexpectedly made his appearance at Sudbury ; my father was exceedingly surprised.

“ I am not sorry to see you returned, sir, but I must suppose something more than common has procured us that pleasure.”

“ Yes,”

"Yes," replied your brother, with a mighty self-sufficient air, "yes, my return is something sudden to be sure, and the cause of it not a little extraordinary; I am married, sir."

"Married!" repeated my father, "what before you are of age; it is not legal, sir."

"But I intend to make it so, by marrying again in England."

"But pray, sir, may I ask who the lady is?"

"Oh! certainly; the lady's name was Madam Roland, the widow of a great banker, she has twenty thousand, sir."

"If so," returned my father, "and the lady is a woman of character, you are a fortunate young man. However, I should be glad to know every particular respecting this marriage, as I hold myself, in some degree, responsible

responsible for your conduct in so important a point."

"By all means," answered he, carelessly, "here is my story. You know I was at Brussels with my friend, he was very expensive; I could not bear to appear in the light of an inferior, and therefore figured away likewise, until I got confoundedly in debt; the supply I had from you was nothing. I was advised to apply to Madam Roland, who lent out money on interest. I waited on her, she proved generous, and I was freed from my embarrassments, by giving her a bond for the money advanced me, payable in two months, though I could not tell how I should raise it. Madam Roland was very agreeable, I was a frequent visitor; I began at last to think she was very partial to me; it struck into my head, Why not try to gain the widow, and pay your debt by giving her a good husband. I hailed the lucky thought, and watched a favourable opportunity to declare my

my passion. I was heard with kindness, and in a few days she agreed to marry me, conditionally, that we should set off for England directly; she procured a priest, and I engaged to have the ceremony performed again on our arrival in England. She made over to me twenty thousand pounds, and has about six more reserved to herself, an immense fortune abroad: in short, we were married, and fled to avoid the pouts and reproaches of her relations. We came safe to London last night, and now, sir, I must beg leave to introduce my wife, and also request you will make her legally so, by giving your consent, and conforming to the laws of this country."

My father, you may be sure, was greatly surprised, but he thought the wisest way now, would be to comply, he therefore signified, that he might bring Mrs. Oswald down to us. He was mightily pleased, set off the same evening, and this morning returned with his wife. I had figured to myself some
old

old frippery French coquette ; no such thing I assure you ; she is, I believe, a dozen years older than your brother, but an agreeable polite woman ; she speaks a little English, sufficient to be understood, and in short, I think he is very fortunate, if appearances may be depended upon. I shall attend them at church to-morrow morning, to confirm their marriage ; your brother says he shall sell the reversion of the living Mr. Menville gave him, having no inclination to devote himself to the church, as his estate and wife's fortune will enable him to live very well. This evening he asked us after you ; I eagerly told him every thing, he seemed affected, Mrs. Oswald wept.

“ Dear sir,” said she, “ rescue your good sister ; make some application to her husband to do her justice.”

“ I will, depend upon it I will ; after to-morrow, when we return to town, I will see my uncle on the business.”

“ But

"But you have no house in town," cried I, "had not Mrs. Oswald better stay with us, 'till you can procure one?"

"I should be very happy to do so, madam, if agreeable to Mr. Oswald."

"By all means," he said, and thanked me very politely for giving the invitation.

I assure you he is greatly altered, and much improved in his manners; I hope he will make a good husband, for I like his wife exceedingly.

Just returned from church. They are now firmly united, and I hope will be happy. My mother thinks the lady showed more love than prudence, in risking herself and fortune into the hands of so young a man, and of whom she knew so little; as a woman at the full age of discretion, and a widow too, she says there was a degree of levity in her conduct, certainly hardly pardonable in a person

person of thirty. However, the ladies abroad, I have been told, are not altogether so scrupulous and precise as the English; the young one's are a thousand times more reserved, but when they marry, paradoxical as it may seem, they marry to obtain their liberty, and ever after kick prudence and discretion out of doors. But I will readily absolve Madame Roland, if she has erred only in favour of Mr. Oswald. To-morrow he goes to London, and will see your uncle, after which he designs writing to Mr. Menville, if he can obtain his address. I am really much pleased to see such an alteration in his disposition, if it is not too sudden to be lasting.

My dear Mrs. Menville, I delayed finishing my letter, until your brother's return: he has seen your uncle, I will not repeat the discourse of such a —; help me to a word bad enough for a wretch so despicable—he is obstinate and unbelieving, nay, he almost made a convert of your brother, to his un-

worthy ideas ; but we have obliged him to blush at being duped by such improbable tales ; he will write you soon. I am in love with your new sister ; this evening she said to Mr. Oswald,

“ I think, when you have taken a house, it ought to be an asylum for your sister ; let her husband be as cross as he pleases, he cannot object to his wife’s residence with you ; and I am sure, from the character those ladies give of her, I should be delighted with such a companion.”

“ I thank you, madam,” I answered, “ Mrs. Menville is deserving your highest esteem ; but so very strict are her ideas, relative to the duty and obedience of wives, that I question if she would accept any situation which was not first pointed out to her by her husband, however desirous she might be to congratulate you and her brother.”

“ Jesu Marie !” cried she, “ what a fate

is her's, how good she must be ; ah ! very few women would bear such indignities like her."

I am of her opinion, and pray most devoutly I may never experience trials like your's, for I know I am not equal to them. I shall send this off immediately, that you may be prepared for Anthony's letter ; I really think all Mr. Menville has a right to expect, is a compliment from you ; that you are going to reside with your brother and his wife, he *cannot*, with any consistency, make the least objection to it : and surely, you will be much happier with them, than you can be in the solitary life you now support in a convent, or even in your favorite cottage. Adieu, my dearest friend, my heart beats in the hope of soon embracing you, and leading you to enjoy a brother and sister's love.

Ever affectionately your's,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

L E T T E R IV.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

IF you do not think me good, grateful and obliging, my dear friend, you do not give me the justice I deserve; this is a second volunteer; I thank you however for your last letter, for your communications, &c. to be sure, meeting Lord Longfield was an untoward circumstance, but can be of no consequence, as perhaps the sequel of my letter may convince you, for he is now with us; I am sure, therefore, his visit was not repeat-

ed, and an accidental interview for a moment, never can, by any representation, do you an injury. Pray, therefore, divest yourself of all fears on that head. Lord Longfield came through Paris; curiosity, *nothing more*, led him to enquire about Mr. Menville and his companion. They had left Paris, and were at Lyons. He came on, by easy journies, to Spa, and finding where we resided, and being slightly, very slightly known to Sir Charles, one morning left a card. I screamed for joy when I saw the name, so dear is every one to me, that has enjoyed the happiness of your acquaintance. Sir Charles returned the visit in the morning, and brought him back to dinner. I had half a mind to jump into his arms, but a little sense of decorum withheld me, and I was contented to welcome him with pleasure and sincerity. He is a most amiable man, prejudiced as I was in his favour, you really have not done him justice. In the evening I had a route, and consequently Sir Charles introduced him to every one he thought deserving his acquaintance. I took
upon

upon me to request permission of the Count and his daughters, to honour his Lordship with their friendship, which was accorded with great graciousness. I asked my Lord what he thought of the ladies,

"Both are beautiful women," answered he, "but they create different ideas; the eldest *entreats* you to admire her, with an expression that cannot be resisted; the other sister *demand*s your admiration, with a haughtiness you dare not withstand, at the same time that you feel an inclination to resist such arbitrary commands. In short, the eldest you may love, the younger one you may respect and admire at a distance."

"You have exactly defined my sentiments of the two sisters," said Sir Charles, "but I am so truly an Englishman, and so fond of my own country-women, that I cannot see any perfection but in them; there may be others more beautiful, but where is the grace, the modest dignity, the conscious sense of

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worth and honour to be found, equal to what you meet with in an English lady?"

"Thank ye, my Lord," said I, "and you too, Sir Charles, I assure you I am very proud of the distinction you make in favour of my country-women, but don't let a blind partiality hood-wink your better judgment; I have very seldom seen equal claims for admiration to what these lovely sisters possess."

"I think, madam," said his Lordship, bowing, "I think *you have* seen superiour claims; claims which are stamped into excellence, by supporting with dignity different situations in life, whether of prosperity or adversity."

"I stand corrected, my Lord, but I said I had "*seldom* seen," and one only exception may be included, and certainly was meant to be so, under that expression."

"I beg

“ I beg *your* pardon, madam, for the observation, and ought to have done you more justice than to have made it.”

So our conversation ended: my Lord is received into our coterie, and we all think him a very desirable acquisition.

I do not, my dear friend, think it possible that trifling girl can do you any prejudice; truth speaks for itself, and conduct so blameless as your's, may defy slander, and all her envenomed train. You did right to make St. Bernard your confidante; a heart like her's, is a fit repository for the secrets of a friend, and without betraying you, she may counteract the malice of others.

I have now a secret to disclose, which will doubtless surprise you; Mrs Neville is very far gone in a passion for Captain Harley; gratitude gradually led the way to her heart whilst her husband lived; she looked up to him only as the preserver of her family;

when he was taken from her, she considered Harley as a superior being, as a father to her children, as her benefactor and friend. Alas! my dear, in a susceptible heart, how easy the transition from gratitude to love, the object so engaging! I am convinced her heart was gone before she ever suspected it; and when Antonia came, when the object of her secret affections paid attention to that lady, she first discovered the nature of that preference she imputed to gratitude alone; hence arose her reserve and melancholy, which gave me so much concern; to the same cause it was that she repelled all the overtures which the Spanish ladies made to her. Accident has discovered the whole secret to me, since which she has been unreserved, but blames and execrates herself for an involuntary weakness which she is determined to overcome.

“Not for ten thousand worlds,” said she,
“would I have Captain Harley suspect the
nature of my attachment to him, he would
hate

hate and despise me; how lightly must he think of a woman, who has buried the husband she doated on, little more than three months since, and so soon to think of another; it cannot, it shall not be, it is tender gratitude alone, I never will indulge another sentiment."

I told her she did herself justice, and was alarmed without any cause; that strong gratitude, in delicate minds, nearly resembled love; her's was nothing more, I was well convinced. This assurance of mine gave her pleasure, and I am persuaded will strengthen her mind to subdue her affection. Antonia is really a heroine; whatever her feelings may be, she struggles with them, and behaves with an ease and propriety that is astonishing to me, who know her heart. I can see plainly, from the efforts of this charming young woman, that love may be conquered by reason and discretion; and for that foolish romantic passion which very young people are apt to make so formidable, and so impos-

fible to be subdued, it exists more in their brain, than in the heart, and is cherished by weakness and inexperience, when sense and fortitude would be superior to indulging passions their judgment must condemn. Antonia frequently speaks of you, with affection and admiration; she wishes her father could be prevailed upon to visit England; I intend founding the Count upon the subject, but my hopes are small, as I know he looks forward to his daughter's union with the Duke de Solis, who, divested of that national jealousy and quick resentment, natural to a Spaniard, every one agrees is a very worthy man, and adores his fair mistress.

“Do you know that I think Mr. Sackville is more than half in love with Mrs. Neville; he is much older, to be sure, yet he is a very agreeable and worthy man, and I wish such a union could take place with all my heart. I am interrupted.”

Ah!

Ah ! my dear, such a scene ? what a God-like being that Harley is, compassionate and beneficent to all. The two Spanish ladies, Lord Longfield, Harley and myself, sallied forth to take a walk ; we left the rest of our party at cards. Sauntering by the water-side, an elderly woman, with a little girl, came towards us, and was passing humbly by us, when accidentally raising her eyes, she saw Harley, down she dropped on her knees,

“ May God Almighty ever bless and preserve you, worthy sir, oh ! you have made my poor heart sing with joy, you have saved my husband and children ! ”

Harley bid her rise, and was for hastening her away.

“ No, no,” cried I, “ you shall not, sir, hide your talents in a napkin.”

“ Pray, good woman, what has this gentleman done for you ? ”

“ Oh ! heaven blefs him,” said she.

“ Pray, Lady Wentworth, go on,” said Harley, “ you already attract observation.”

“ Well then,” returned I, “ you shall be obeyed, but I will not have my curiosity balked ; here, Peter, step back, shew this woman our house, bid her call on me two hours hence, she will not repent it.”

The woman took leave with a thousand blessings, whilst Harley looked as confused as if we had detected him in a crime.

“ Upon my word, Lady Wentworth, you have a wonderful deal of curiosity about trifles ; what can you suppose there is worth knowing in the account this poor woman can give ? ”

“ No

“No matter, I shall find out some of your amours, perhaps.”

He smiled, and the subject dropped.

I was scarcely got home, before the woman made her appearance; she was evidently frightened, but I bade her take courage, and desired she would tell me every thing about herself and family.

And please your ladyship, madam, my husband was a baker, and we got very good business, and did very well; I had children fast to be sure, but what of that, they all grew up, five of them, four boys and a girl. Several years we lived happy; one boy served with his father, the other three went into the army; alack, my lady, they were killed in less than two years; it went sorely to our hearts, and I thought I must have died too, but God spared me, and well he did; and so, madam, my girl married a man in good business, who is settled at
Lisle;

Lisle; my son, who helped his father, married a very honest, sober young woman; they lived with us, she had three children, in bringing a fourth into the world, she died; my son, who was never very strong, took it so to heart, that in less than three months he died too; so then we were left alone, God help us, with four small children; my poor husband grew desponding, as I may say; he had always the rheumatics, he could not work hard; we took a journeyman, he cheated us cruelly, and so from one thing to the other, we were ruined. A man to whom we owed money for flour, got hold of my poor husband, ill as he was, to take him to prison. I and the poor children followed, "crying our eyes out, when God sent that blessed gentleman, that was with your ladyship. He asked what was the matter, the neighbours told him—sure as you are alive, my lady, he took us all into a house, sent for money, paid the debt, and sent us home with five English guineas in our pockets. Next day he called upon us, and he has agreed with a great banker

banker here, to pay us twenty pounds a year ; he has taken the eldest boy, six years old, and put him to school, and says he will do something for all of them. God blefs him, he is an angel to be sure, and every time I see him, methinks I could fall down and worship him."

I was greatly affected with the poor woman's story, I gave her something, desired her to bring the eldest girl, who was four years old, and I would provide for her.

The poor creature went away in tears, blessing God, the good gentleman, and my ladyship.

" Don't you think Harley is a glorious fellow ?" I mentioned the story to Mr. Sackville ; he has undertaken to provide for the two younger children, allowing the grand-mother twenty pounds a year for them, and when they are fit to go to school, will empower some person here to take care

of them. Thus, through Harley's means, the family will be made comfortable, who must otherwise have perished with indigence in a prison. Poor Mrs. Neville wept aloud, and was obliged to leave the room, when informed of these particulars ; this morning she said,

“ For heaven's sake, my dear lady Wentworth, tell me no more of Captain Harley's merits, I cannot bear to hear them, do not think me ungrateful, but every good action of his, is a dagger to my heart ; Oh that I was at Sudbury, or any where from him.”

Poor woman ; for her sake I shall not be sorry when we are separated. I shall write you one letter more before we leave Spa ; I impatiently expect to hear further from you—write constantly, my beloved friend, if you wish me to be happy.

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER V.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MY dear Mrs. Colemore, I am sent for express to Lyons, by Mr. Menville, who is dangerously ill. I fly to obey the summons; God grant I may find him alive and better. Tell my brother, tell his lady, I congratulate them with my whole heart; I hope to demand, and deserve their love. Write not 'till you hear from me. Heaven bless you, and all you value.

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

I Am just setting off for Lyons, my dear Lady Wentworth; an express I have received from Mr. Menville, who lies dangerously ill, will carry me there with the utmost expedition. Oh! if he does but live, I may yet be happy! I go alone, the good St. Bernard will take care of my child, and I leave Patty to attend it. The Abbess received a letter, as well as myself, from my *husband's brother*, she said. I shall write the moment I have leisure. Adieu, my beloved Charlotte, pray for me, but write not 'till you hear

hear from, or of me; your letters, if any already written, will be sent after me to Lyons. Farewell, dearest friend of my heart, heaven preserve you and all your family.

I am ever,

Your's sincerely,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

I Have been here two days, my dear lady ; Mr. Menville is alive, and that is all I can say. This is the first hour I have quitted him since my arrival. My heart, my spirits are almost broken ; good God, what scenes have I gone through ? oh ! my dear friend, what horror is equal to a death-bed, where the mind is disturbed. I have left him now in a sweet sleep ; it may prove salutary to him, but the physicians give me no hopes. I will try, if possible, to describe, to relate

relate to you what has passed since I wrote last. The man who brought the express, was ordered to accompany me to Lyons; we flew, I may say, through the country, for I would not stop on the road, but to change horses. When we came to the house, my strength and spirits failed me, and whilst the man went up to prepare Mr. Menville for my presence, a woman servant brought me some refreshment; but judge of my surprise, when after taking a little wine and water, and by the help of salts, preserved from fainting, I was waiting for a summons to attend my husband, when the door opened, and Mr. Martin appeared; I really screamed.

Mr. Martin said, "I doubt not, madam, but my presence must greatly surprise you; another time, and I will account for it; at present Mr. Menville wishes to see you."

I gave him my hand without speaking, and was conducted to the room; he led me to a chair by the side of the bed;

"Mrs.

"Mrs. Menville," said he, and immediately left the room in great emotion.

I undrew the curtain; what an object presented itself; my husband apparently in the arms of death; tears running down his cheeks; he held out his hand, but was unable to speak. I threw myself on my knees, kissed his hand, and wept bitterly.

"For me," said he, feebly, "*do* you, *can* you, weep for me! oh, my dear Emily, I have been a villain."—He could say no more.

Again I kissed his hand, "Let all that is past be forgotten; you call me *your dear Emily*, she is your tender, your affectionate wife; look up, my dearest husband, with hope and comfort, you will get well, and we shall both be happy."

"Angel," cried he, pressing my hand, "what a blind, infatuated wretch have I been;

been; what a serpent have I held to my bosom; how cruelly have I treated you?"

"Not one word on former occurrences, my dear Mr. Menville, compose your mind, I am happy, more happy in your restored affection, than if I had never forfeited it."

"Forgive me, forgive me," repeated he, "I see, I feel I have been a monster."

Again his eyes overflowed; that, and the emotions I felt before, overcame me quite, and with a faint groan, I fell to the ground. The nurse and Mr. Martin, who were within hearing, run into the room, and thought *him* dead, and *me* dying. I was soon recovered, but it was some time before my husband shewed returning life, and then he was so weak, so ill, as to be incapable of talking. I remained with him all night; now and then he spoke a few words faintly, blessing me, but they were scarcely articulate. Yesterday he was a
little

little better, but I would not permit him to talk, and in this state he continued last night, without any rest, but perfectly in his senses. About half an hour ago he dropped asleep; I just left him to change my clothes, have written thus far, and now return to my melancholy feat.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

MR. MARTIN IN CONTINUATION.

I Take up the pen to address you, madam, by the command of Mrs. Menville, who is at present incapable of the employment. Mr. Menville is no more ! be his errors forgotten, and may he be happy ; he expired blessing his wife, and all who had been her friends ; sensible to the last moment, and truly repentant. Poor lady ! she was very unequal to scenes like these ; persecution she could bear with firmness, but the death of a

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husband, conscious of the unmerited ill-treatment he had given her, his tenderness, his entreaties for pardon, and for her prayers, these things she could not support. After he had closed his eyes for ever, she fainted several times; the servants placed her in bed, and then she said,

“ Pray leave me a few hours to myself— Mr. Martin, be so good to write Lady Wentworth ?”

I retired to obey her commands, and shall inform you of every circumstance I know, previous to Mrs. Menville's being sent for.

I had the honour of spending a week some time ago, with Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, after my return from France; during that visit, by accident I heard the name of the convent Mrs. Menville resided at, which gave me some pleasure. The day before I left Sudbury, I received a letter from my friend Chambers, who resides at Paris, giving

ing me a piece of news he thought would gratify my resentment and hatred of Mr. Menville, and which account he had from the banker who managed that gentleman's affairs. Mr. Menville and Mrs. Thurkill had retired to Lyons, where an Italian nobleman payed great attention to the lady which Mr. Menville did not approve of, and consequently there was perpetual janglings and quarrels between them, which displeased both. It happened, that from taking a violent cold, that gentleman had a rash fever, which it was apprehended would fall upon his lungs; and that, during the time his fever was at the highest, Mrs. Thurkill had left him, and quitted Lyons with the nobleman, who was going to Venice, taking with her all the jewels he had given her, also all the money, which it seems was always confided to her care. The man servant applied to a banker, mentioned his master's situation, and the banker's name who had his money in Paris: in consequence of which, some money was advanced for present sup-

port, and a letter written to Paris. My friend Chambers happened to be with the banker when it arrived, and immediately dispatched the intelligence to me. I set off directly, post for Lyons; when I arrived, the servant was exceedingly glad to see me, his master was very ill, and vexed himself at Mrs. Thurkill's desertion of him, he said very much.

"Indeed," added he, "my master takes it sadly to heart, more than he ought, for she is a vile woman, and I can prove it."

From what he said further, I understood he had shared the lady's favours with his superior, and I believe was not pleased at her new intrigue. Having sent up my name, poor Menville was rejoiced to see me. I saw he was in a declining state, and thought it a fit opportunity to speak of Mrs. Menville. I confessed all my former evil intentions, relative to that lady, her conduct, and my sincere repentance; my journey to Cornwall,

wall, her rejection of my services; I then mentioned the whole of her behaviour to Lord Longfield; the strictness of her principles, her regard for him, and submission to his commands; in short, I endeavoured to do that charming woman the justice she deserved, in every point which had come within my knowledge. He seemed to devour every word I said, and when I stopt, like one awakening from a deep sleep, he gave a heavy sigh.

“ If Mrs. Menville is, as you represent her, from your candid confession of your own behaviour to her, I can have no reason to doubt it; tell me, Martin, what am I, who have deserted, neglected and confined her from her friends and society, and for whom? one of the most abandoned of women—oh! Emily, my wife, my child, what have I not to answer for? but I shall never see them more, my death will soon give freedom to both.”

Finding him thus sensible of his errors, I ventured to hint, that if he was to send for Mrs. Menville, I was persuaded she would instantly come to him, and her care might restore his health.

“No,” said he, “that can never be; but will she come, think you; will she speak peace and pardon to the man who has so cruelly injured her?”

“I told him I would stake my life upon it.”

“Send then, by all means send; let me see her before I die, that I may obtain her forgiveness, which I do not deserve.”

I instantly dispatched a messenger, whose errand succeeded as I expected. Mr. Menville confessed to me, that his passion for his wife before he married her, was very violent, and not a little increased, by his desire
to

to triumph over Harley, to whom he had conceived a great aversion : after he succeeded, and she became his wife, he was sensible she was too good for him, as he could not be constant to one object. Miss Shepherd threw herself in his way ; her lively playful spirit pleased him ; she was not cruel and apprehensive of consequences, it was thought best she should marry : Thurkill liked her, and he persuaded him to take her with ten thousand pounds ; he caught at the bait, they were married, but the amour was still carried on, 'till security made them careless, and the consequence soon became public. He further said, that his motives for bringing Mrs. Thurkill to his house, were these ; he thought Mrs. M——'s appearance with her, would silence the censures of the world, and invalidate Thurkill's testimony ; but finding her fixed in her determination to resist such an insult, that woman at length persuaded him to get rid of his wife, and knowing how much he injured her, it was painful to him to have her in the

house; yet he thought the world would reflect upon him if he sent her away. Mrs. Thurkill finding him irresolute, then assured him of a correspondence being carried on, through Mrs. Colemore, between Captain Harley and his wife; also, that she gave great encouragement to Lord Longfield; possessed of this intelligence, he observed no measures, Mrs. Menville was sent off, and he devoted himself openly to the vile woman, who imposed upon his senses. The great derangement of his circumstances, in consequence of gambling, and the extravagancies of his mistress, suggested to him the necessity of selling his estates, and retiring abroad, to avoid the damages, which he expected would fall heavy; this proposal met her approbation, and was soon executed. A strict watch was kept on Mrs. Menville, and her being settled so near Lord Longfield, gave grounds for the injurious opinion he had been led to form of her. To mortify her, therefore, she was ordered to France, but he believes now, he

he said, Mrs. Thurkill hoped to drive her to some desperate step, and was disappointed at her obedience. He owned, that her compliance with his orders, and her answers to some of his letters, gave him now and then some doubts and compunction, but he did not wish to be undeceived. The tour to Lyons, the infamous conduct of Mrs. Thurkill, had opened his eyes to her deceit, and he was now thoroughly convinced, he had grossely injured his wife, and if she would condescend to visit him, which he had no right to expect, after the ill-treatment she had received, it would afford him great consolation to obtain her forgiveness before he expired."

It was at several different periods, madam, that Mr. Menville made me this relation, and he continued exceedingly agitated, until he heard of her arrival; indeed, I was greatly apprehensive he would not live to see her. Mrs. Menville told me she had written to you an account of their meeting. She look-

ed like an angel of peace come to bless mankind; the sweet sensibility of her countenance; her tone of voice, all was calculated to sink deep into the soul, and speak comfort to the wretched. Poor Menville was quite subdued; her kindness wounded him more than reproach could have done, and I saw a visible change drawing on. Nature exhausted, fell into a temporary calm sleep; his wife left him for the first time, for an hour; she returned before he awoke; when he began to move, she hung over him; he drew her hand to his lips.

“Best of women, of wives, forgive me, hate not my memory, live and be happy. May the Almighty bless you, and my child; bless all your friends—I am going, heaven have mercy.”

He spoke a few words more, inwardly, and in a few minutes expired. I assisted in conveying the dear lady to her apartment, and have executed her commands, in writing

to her dear Lady Wentworth. Depend upon every attention and care that a brother, or the sincerest friend can possibly pay to merit like her's, and believe me with great respect, madam,

Your devoted and obedient servant,

ROBERT MARTIN.

to her dear Lady Warrington. Depend
upon every attention and care that a friend
or the kindest friend can possibly pay to
me like mine, and believe me with great

LETTER IX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MR. Martin tells me, my dear friend,
that he wrote a few lines to Mr.
Colemore, you are therefore no stranger to
my melancholy situation. Ah! how unfor-
tunate I am, no sooner was my husband con-
vinced of my innocence, than he was taken
from me—alas! how many painful days have
I experienced, from the suspicions Mr. Men-
ville had been led to entertain of my con-
duct? how ardently; with what confidence
4 have

have I looked forward to a certainty of being restored to his affection, when that influence which over-ruled me should be no more. How vain my expectations ! how little to be depended upon the prospect of human felicity ! yet my dear Mrs. Colemore, I rejoice that I had the happiness of being with my husband when he drew his last breath ; had he died without being reconciled, without being convinced of my truth and innocence, I should have been unhappy for life. Mr. Martin's conduct is such as entitles him to my highest esteem and gratitude ; he has engaged in the necessary melancholy business, with the attention of a friend. Last week the remains of my dear husband was sent off to Sudbury, to be interred there, at his own request ; his old and faithful servant attends, and I hope Doctor Ellis will receive the preparative letter in time. I cannot express to you what I have gone through these last ten days ; the shock I suffered from the express, the melancholy catastrophe, the repentance and affection of Mr. Menville, all together depressed

depressed my mind and spirits beyond description; perhaps it may be believed, as he was not the first choice of my heart, and his subsequent conduct could not be supposed to conciliate my affections, my grief cannot be of that violent nature, which in other circumstances I might have felt; but my dear Mrs. Colemore, a mind of sensibility must keenly feel a situation like mine; for many months a prey to grief, borne down by reproach, and disgraced by unjust suspicions, I looked forward with hope and expectation, that a time might come, when I should be restored to a husband's love, and my character justified to the world; now, I have recovered the one only in the hour of death, and 'tis to my friends alone that I can appear clear from reproach. Indeed, indeed my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am very unhappy. To-morrow I shall return to the convent, and embrace my dear fatherless Emily; I have neither spirits nor strength to travel so fast as when I came here, though anxious to see my child. I forgot to tell you Mr. Men-

ville

ville made a will, previous to seeing me, in which he has given me all his remaining fortune, and left his child solely in my power; I will deserve the trust he has nobly conferred upon me; 'tis a proof of his confidence and good opinion which I shall be emulous to merit. I have written to Mr. Watson, to know if the cottage is disposed of, if it is, I must look out for a similar situation, for never more will I mix with the gay world. In the society of a few chosen friends I shall look for that happiness I have hitherto sought for in vain. Adieu my dear Mrs. Colemore.

I am ever, and sincerely your's,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER X.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

A GAIN I am returned to the convent, and to my dear child, who, thank heaven, is in perfect health; I was obliged to acknowledge it was to my husband I was sent for, and my sable habit being different from what I had worn, announced to them the melancholy event. I shall stay here until I have an answer from Mr. Watson; I wish I may be fortunate enough to regain my sweet cottage, for as to living with my brother

ther and his lady, I cannot think of it; they are gay and lively; I have no longer any taste for amusements or company, I wish to live to my own heart, and as becomes my situation, which I think more delicate than any other; my child will engross a large portion of my time, books, work and music, with now and then an agreeable neighbour, will fill up the intervals: added to which, will be the delightful employment of writing to my friends. Mr. Martin was so kind as to attend me to the convent; his behaviour has been truly friendly, and I think myself much obliged to him; happy for him that he has seen his errors so early in life, before sickness and misfortunes have laid their heavy hand upon him. I hope the scenes he has lately been a witness to, will confirm his good purposes, and prevent any inclination for old habits to resume their former dominion over him.

My dearest Lady Wentworth, I have this moment received your last letter, the contents

contents have surprised me, I shall make no comments however. I am charmed with the character of Antonia; I wish most sincerely, Captain Harley or Lord Longfield may bring such a prize to England. The difference in religious principles, with liberal and well informed minds, can scarcely be an objection, unless the Count should be more contracted in his ideas; yet, if Antonia *can* conform to her father's wishes, without doing too great a violence to her own, doubtless she will feel more satisfaction in the performance of a duty, than in the reflection of giving pain to her friends, by an indulgence of her own inclinations. The case indeed is so delicate, that no person can have a right to interfere.

I am not well, yet have no actual complaints to make; my spirits are depressed, and a general langour pervades over my whole frame. Whilst my mind was in a continual agitation; whilst I thought myself injured and insulted, I felt an indignation
arising

arising from conscious innocence, which supported me through every thing, and the flatterer, hope, was at hand to inspire gay visions of returning happiness. Alas! those hopes are fled for ever. I was justified in the sight of my husband, only in his last moments, I have no longer the power of acquiring his esteem, by my endeavours to reconcile him to himself, to make him happy, he felt remorse with his last breath, nor could he bless me, he said, without execrating himself! I hope I conveyed peace to his mind, I hope he died free from reproach; but oh, my friend, trivial errors in that moment, wound more than capital ones can do in the hey-day of health; and the sense he then entertained of his former follies, wrung his mind with inexpressible anguish. My poor child knows not the irreparable loss she has sustained; it must be my care now, to supply the want of a father, by the strictness of my attention to her;—yes, dearest Emily, to you I devote my future days; no other care, no other engagement, shall ever interrupt,

interrupt, or supercede the duty I owe you; your father, if permitted to look down on those below, shall see the duty, the affection I bore him, now centered in his child.

The dear, the good St. Bernard has, by her kindness, made herself so much beloved by the little creature, that she almost rivals me; she lisps a few words; mamma is equally given to the good nun and myself. But I tire you my dear Lady Wentworth, with such uninteresting particulars, to *you* at least uninteresting; I must therefore quit my pen, until I find better spirits, and more pleasing subjects. But in every situation I am always, dearest friend,

Your faithful and affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

JOY to you, my dearest friend. I enclose a letter from our beloved Harry, which I hope will convey much pleasure to *your* mind; at the same time I must tell you that you have deeply wounded *mine*, by preferring a cottage in Wales among strangers, to a residence with your friends. Reflect upon your intended scheme; see if it is consistent with what you owe to the affection of those who submitted, though with reluctance, to your former

former seclusion. But the reasons you then adduced no longer subsist, therefore it is unkindness to them, and depriving yourself of the power to give pleasure to others; it is unjust to both. If you love us, I need not use any arguments to convince you of it; but if you are determined not to oblige us; if you can reconcile it to your own feelings, to wound the bosom of your friends, I have done for ever on the subject.

Mrs. Neville's house is ready for her reception: her sister impatiently expects her. The grateful girl shed tears of joy when she heard of Captain Harley's generosity to her. "What a benefactor, what a noble, generous mind! O! how I long to see him, to fall at his feet, and thank him for his kindness to me and my family!"

"Dear Mrs. Colemore," said she, "I hope he is ugly and deformed."

"In-

"Indeed," replied I, smiling, "your hopes are vain; for he is *only* one of the handsomest men I have ever seen."

"I am sorry for it," returned she, seriously; "for perfection in a man is so rare, that I fear gratitude may endanger one's heart; and he, you know, has none to bestow in return."

"Being sensible of *that*," said I, "will prove your best shield against his perfections."

My father is exceedingly pleased with the disposition of Mr. Menville's will. He said it was the best compliment, and the properest reparation he could make, and he thinks it right it should be publicly known.

Colonel Huntley, who has your house, called on my father two days ago, and being informed of every thing relative to your affairs, and that the estate at Sudbury was
part

part of your jointure, very politely offers to give up the lease, if it will be any accommodation to you; and what can you do better than reside in your own house? and requests that you will consider it not as the least inconvenience to himself, as he shall feel happy to have the power of obliging a lady for whose character he has the highest respect. My father promised me to make the offer in his name, and I have taken upon me to do it. I submit it to your own judgment, and will not presume to persuade, whatever are my wishes."

Your brother Anthony seems mightily pleased with the justice done you, but is rather apprehensive you will meet difficulties from your uncle, who will not be over pleased at being deprived from managing your business, but which step your brother strongly recommends, not being very fond of Mr. Seymour, I believe. Your sister I like better every day: they have taken a house in town, until they can have possession of
their

their own estate, which will be near twelve months yet before he is of age; and I think it fortunate that they settle in the country.

Mrs. Oswald is mortified that you will not accept her invitation. I told her you were a strange dear creature, but that I had been so accustomed to think whatever you did was "best, discretest, and wisest," that I dared not blame your determinations, though I was myself a sufferer by them.

We have had a visit from Martin, and thanked him most cordially for his attentions to you. The man seems to tread on air, he is so rejoiced at the change in your affairs, and that you can no more be persecuted.

I forgot to tell you I have had a letter from Lady Hartwill, making very kind enquiries after your health, and requesting to know when you think of returning to Eng-

land. I wrote an answer, giving her what little information I had on the subject.

I close this letter, my dear Mrs. Menville, not entirely devoid of hope, but that you will accede to the ardent wishes of all your friends, and bless us with your society.

Ever your's,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY dearest friend, what have you not suffered from your journey, and the melancholy event, as sudden as unsuspected! I know your heart and its tender sensibilities: I should fear much for your health, did I not know also that you have another duty still to fulfil, that of living for your sweet child; that consideration, I am sure, will have its full weight with a mind like your's, and is my greatest consolation at present, when I am so far from you. But I entreat

you to remain at the convent until we call for you. My objections to return through France are now removed, and I never will forgive you, if you deprive us of the pleasure I promise myself of returning with you to England. Within a week after you receive this letter, you may expect us. Take comfort, my dear Mrs. Menville; suffer not your spirits to be depressed; no one knows what is true philosophy better than yourself, or can submit to the dispensations of Providence with more resignation. You have been called upon to severe trials; your fortitude has been equal to them, by a melancholy catastrophe you could neither foresee nor prevent: you have been justified where you wished to be so; you have the noblest testimony in your favour a dying man could give; and you can in the purity of your heart triumph over your enemies, if any such exist. With all these causes for ease and peace I never can excuse *you*, of all women, if you suffer your courage to be subdued. Let me find you resigned and cheerful; let me embrace

embrace the dearest friend of my heart, and exultingly say, "Her troubles are at an end;" not, perhaps, exactly as you could have wished, but in the way Providence thought best, and therefore to be submitted to without repining.

The Count and his beautiful daughters quit Spa on the same day with us; we shall travel part of the way together, and indeed are equally loth to part. I ventured to propose a tour to England. The Count answered, "I am compelled now to return into Spain; but if an event takes place, which I flatter myself will, I shall be very happy to make one of the party next spring."

"And I," said Antonia, "shall particularly rejoice to accompany you."

"Nor shall I be backward," added Isabella; "I never expected to have esteemed English folks as I do the present party; and if many of your country-women resemble

Lady Wentworth and her friends, they must be entitled to esteem, wherever they are met with."

We bowed to this compliment of Isabella's, which gave me not a little pleasure, as I found of course some of her prejudices must have been done away.

Antonia behaves like an angel; not the least partiality is visible. She can be lively and entertaining, without that restraint she wore when first she came to Spa: her health, her spirits, are better; there is no embarrassment in her manner; in short, she has, by uncommon resolution, vanquished a passion weak minds think invincible.

When I received Mr. Martin's letter, and communicated its contents, she said to me, "I pity your sweet friend the trials she has had to encounter with; but I hope they are all at an end, and that henceforth she will enjoy felicity. Should we ever visit
England,

England, one of my first wishes will be to be introduced to Mrs. Menville."

"And I, my dear Madam," answered your friend, "shall be particularly happy to be instrumental to such an introduction."

I one day enquired of the Count and Isabella the character of the Duke de Solis. They both assured me he was every way unexceptionable in fortune, person, and temper; that Antonia had taken a dislike to him, no one knew why; and that the Duke had conceived a jealousy of Captain Harley; "but," added the Count, "I am sure there was not the least foundation for it: the gentleman never treated her with any particular attention; and as to my daughter, it was impossible she should entertain any partiality beyond esteem for a foreigner, and of a different religion. She has been very unhappy, but I think both her health and lively spirits are restored, and I am not without hopes that on our return I shall see her united to

one of the worthiest noblemen in Spain with her own consent."

We have this day been settling the affairs of the baker's family, securing their annuities, and our banker has kindly promised to see the two younger ones taken care of. I intend bringing my little Dora with me; Captain Harley does the same with Francis; and we enjoy the delight of being followed by the prayers and blessings of the family. Mr. Sackville and Captain Harley we shall drop at Paris; they design to stay there a fortnight. The rest of the party will hasten on to Abbeville, where we propose resting a night, for I must see the charming St. Bernard, and thank her in person for her kindness to me, in taking care of my friend; and then we hope to have such an addition to our party, as will make us all completely happy.

Oh! my dear Mrs. Menville, how impatiently I long for the time to fold you in
my

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE.

31

my arms, and assure you, neither time, place, or accident, has lessened the love and admiration which reflects so much honour on myself, in being able to distinguish merit, and so happy as to be permitted to subscribe myself,

Your truly-affectionate friend,

C. WENTWORTH.

LETTER XIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my dear Mrs. Colemore, and one from Mr. Watson, came to hand at the same time. My sweet cottage is disposed of, consequently my first wish is rendered abortive. The next possible good, if I cannot be quite secluded, will be to reside in your neighbourhood, but it must be retired; neither my own house, nor a house in the town, will please me. Should you hear of any decent little box about ten or a dozen miles from Sudbury, if detached from
others

others the better, or near a small village, I shall be much obliged to you to inform me; I will either purchase or rent it. Be so good to make my compliments to Colonel Huntley; I am very sensible of his polite offer, but, besides that the house is too large for my plan of living, I do not chuse to reside so near the town. I shall be very happy, therefore, to have the house in his hands, if agreeable to him, otherwise he may throw up the lease when he pleases.

I have this moment a letter from Lady Wentworth, which obliges me to change my plan. She insists upon my accompanying her to her house for the present. She has altered her route, purposely to call for me, and has not left me the power of a refusal, she will so quickly follow the letter. I am vexed and disconcerted, dearly as I love her, and anxious as I am to see her; I could well have excused this act of kindness now; but to decline going with her, when she comes round through Paris purposely

posely on my account, would be an act of ingratitude I could not forgive myself; therefore I must obey.

I have many obligations to Mr. Martin, too many, they pain me, because I never can return them: in his own benevolence, in his wishes to serve his friends, he must find his reward. I am much obliged to Lady Hartwill; and when I arrive in England, shall certainly thank her for the honour she does me.

My brother's ideas and mine coincide with respect to my uncle. It is my intention to take every thing out of his hands. I design to request the favour of Sir Charles Wentworth and Mr. Colemore to be trustees for my Emily. I will reserve nothing but my jointure, every thing else I shall give up; and a long minority will, I hope, make her a very decent fortune.—If Mrs. Neville *should* marry again, and Miss Neville *should* remain single, I don't know any thing would
give

give me so much gratification as having her to reside with me. But of this hereafter.

As the time I shall stay with Lady Wentworth will be very short, I still request you will look out for a neat cottage for me. It is reported here, that convents will be abolished, and the nuns permitted to come out. Should such an alteration take place, I have engaged the amiable St. Bernard to seek an asylum with me. I shall sincerely regret leaving her, for every day increases my esteem, and little Emily doats on her. Miss Southwell has apologized to me for her freedom of speech.

“ You could not injure me, Miss Southwell; but I would wish it may be a lesson to you in future, not to put unfavourable constructions on appearances or situations which you are not perfectly acquainted with.”

She offered to read me a letter she had received from Lord Longfield, but I declined it.

“ Such

"Such praises," said she, "such respectful expressions of esteem and admiration, I scarce ever saw or heard of."

I did not chuse to take any notice, nor appear to have any gratification from her communication, but to treat it merely as a matter of perfect indifference. I suppose, however, that his Lordship wrote in consequence of my letter to Lady Wentworth.

I shall scarcely write you again until my arrival at Wentworth-Park, in Hertfordshire. Could I any ways avoid it, I would not go; for in my present state of mind, I can add no pleasure to the society of my friends.

My sincerest respects to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, Mr. Colemore, and Miss Neville, and believe me, my dear Mrs. Colemore,

Your obliged and affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

SIR CHARLES WENTWORTH

TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

MY dear Harley, we got safe to Abbeville this morning about eleven o'clock, and immediately Lady Wentworth and myself proceeded to the convent. Mrs. Menville soon made her appearance. I was shocked to see her; poor Charlotte burst into a flood of tears: they neither of them could speak for some moments. This charming woman boasted of her fortitude and spirits, but she has suffered much; she
is

is thin, pale, and languid, yet beautiful and interesting beyond imagination. I will not repeat their conversation; I could not do them justice. Two affectionate hearts, with sensibility like their's, I have seldom met with; and their mutual friendship does honour to both. I am proud of my wife, Harley, and therefore must include both in one praise.

We prevailed on her to go out and dine with us. She returned with Madame St. Bernard and her lovely child, the image of its mother, except the eyes, which are dark, like Mr. Menville's. The nun is indeed a charming woman. Lady Wentworth kissed her fingers through the grate, and thanked her a thousand times for her kindness to Mrs. Menville.

We carried off the angelic widow, and introduced her to her delighted friends. Mr. and Mrs. Moleworth adore her; Mrs. Neville was exceedingly affected: her grateful heart

heart sprung to her eyes; she blest her for her kindness to her sister, and was so overcome by her sensibility and gratitude, that she was obliged to retire.

We shall stay here two days. Mrs. Menville does not feel any pleasure in the idea of returning to England; at the same time she is sensible she ought not to remain in a convent. We shall keep her at the Park as long as we can; but she is determined to retire to a cottage of her own. I hope, dear Harley, I shall yet see you and that lovely woman happy.

I suppose Lord Longfield will remain abroad some months. I am greatly interested for that nobleman: he has many virtues, and is singular for his attachment to his late Lady. A valuable woman, indeed, in this age of dissipation and folly, cannot be too much honoured or regretted.

I am

I am interrupted.—I promised you only *two* lines of information; and having exceeded that, you have no right to complain.—You will hear from me again when we arrive in England.

I am,

Dear Harley,

Sincerely your's,

CHARLES WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

I AM here at Wentworth-Park, my dear Mrs. Colemore, happy in the society of my friends, and am commissioned by Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth to request, to solicit, you and Mr. Colemore, with Miss Neville, will add to our pleasure, by coming to us with all possible expedition: they protest Mrs. Neville shall not go to Sudbury, until you come to accompany her back. Oblige us, my good friends; you cannot
conceive

conceive how greatly we shall rejoice in such an acquisition to our happy party.

I shall go back to Lady Wentworth's arrival at Abbeville. I was fearful who might be in her suite. She delicately informed me Lord Longfield was at Spa, Mr. Sackville and Captain Harley at Paris; I could therefore make no objection to accompany them to England.

My dear St. Bernard shed floods of tears on our parting; nor was I less affected, Ah! how different our situations! *She* confined within the walls of a gloomy convent, without friends or consolation; I returning with my beloved companions to the land of liberty, where more dear friends awaited me.

“ Promise me, dearest Madam,” said I, embracing her, “ give me your honour, that if the regulations talked of respecting convents take place, you will be the happy
com-

companion of my future days; will assist me in the care of my sweet Emily."

"Yes," answered she, "yes, my dearest Lady, I will, I do promise you. Ah! where can I be so happy! With my brothers I could not reside, even if they would receive me; and I candidly own, if liberty is offered me, I shall not prefer the convent: with whom then could I wish to live but with you! To have the education of that darling child would satisfy my warmest wishes; doubt not, therefore, of my acceptance with joy of your kind offer."

We embraced several times. I took leave of the Abbess and community with respect, and had their prayers for my future happiness in the world, and eternal felicity in the life to come.

We had a short and pleasant passage, and, without resting in London, proceeded on to the Park, which is twenty-five miles beyond it,

it, an elegant house and an enchanting situation. My worthy friends study to make every body easy and happy; I never saw a picture of truer felicity than in their behaviour to each other, and to their friends.—We are going a little tour round the villages; adieu for the present.

If you have not already secured for me a house that you could approve, suspend for the present any further proceedings: I have seen a sweet, beautiful house in the cottage style, that I think I shall like extremely. It is situated in a delightful retired vale, encompassed with woods, and a trout-stream, well supplied, running through them; two large gardens, one for the kitchen, the other fruit and flowers, with a small, but charming shrubbery, and excellent gravel walks. There is plenty of game, which I am very fond of; and it is about three miles from a market-town, where I can be supplied with every necessary of life;—the distance from Wentworth-Park near nine miles. The
house

house is not large, but handsome and convenient; a hall, two parlours, three handsome rooms, with two light dressing-closets, on the first floor, and four good chambers on the attic; good kitchens, laundry, and dairy, with three servants' rooms over. There is a small orchard of excellent apples, and a large meadow of seven acres, at the back of the house. The whole is only fifty-six pounds a-year. Sir Charles calls on the proprietor to-morrow; for I should like to have a long lease of it. Should I be fortunate enough to obtain it, there I shall fix my future abode; but previous to that I will visit Sudbury; and if you comply with our wishes, shall certainly return with you.

I have written to my brother this morning: also to my uncle. I suppose the latter has heard from Harry. I forgot to send you in my last letter the contents of the one you so kindly transmitted to me; I was so hurried by Lady Wentworth's, that, although I
had

had copied it for ~~you~~, I omitted sending it. You will let my brother see the letter when you have perused it. I should hope he will not fix his residence at St. Helena, though it appears doubtful, I think.

Every one in this family join in love and compliments to you and your's. Hasten to us, and you will oblige all, particularly

Your sincerely affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE,

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

MR. HENRY OSWALD TO MRS. MENVILLE.

My dearest sister,

HOWEVER I appeared to keep up my spirits, and assume a resolution necessary for the undertaking I was embarked in, I felt the parting from my father and yourself a severe task, and was extremely melancholy and distressed that night.

The following morning the Captain introduced me to several gentlemen passengers, and assured me I should find half a dozen

very charming women at dinner; the Governor of St. Helena's lady and daughter, with four young handsome ladies, going to India to see their friends, and make their fortunes. This last intelligence disgusted me: I had no idea a young woman of delicacy could go on such a voyage with an avowed intention of getting well married; I therefore held them in very little estimation. At dinner we all assembled, and were introduced to each other. The Governor's lady, Mrs. Morrison, is a very polite, agreeable woman, about forty; the daughter, Miss Julia, near nineteen, and, without being beautiful, is the most captivating girl I ever saw: her face is pleasing, and rather more than agreeable, good features, and a tolerable complexion; but there is good-humour, sweetness, and steadiness in every look. She is elegantly made, and her whole appearance is interesting, and claims attention. The other four young ladies had much greater pretensions to beauty and admiration: they certainly obtained it;

but

but then your admiration stopt at the face, and, after an hour's conversation, the heart involuntarily returned to the modest, amiable Julia, without arrogance, vanity, or envy. To those who sought for the gratification of the eyes only, those ladies had assuredly the first claims; but the man who could distinguish merit, would in a few moments be interested for the lovely Julia. I found my partiality increase every day: a Mr. Mosely, who had been in England for education, was about my age, and was returning to his father at Bengal, held the same sentiments with myself; and his pretensions being every way superior to mine, I was condemned to silence and despair. The other ladies had each of them their admirers; but one of them, a Miss Halliday, treated me with a particular distinction. As I felt nothing for her but the civility every lady, particularly in a situation like our's, was entitled to, I did not for a long time notice her partiality. Mr. Mosely first took upon him to observe it, and rallied me always when

Julia was present about Miss Halliday. I told him, what I really believed, that he did me an honour I by no means deserved, and that I was confident she had no preference of me to any other gentleman. However Mosely persisted in his own conjectures, and at length induced Mr. Thompson, a gentleman who was fond of her, to credit his tale: the consequence was, Thompson watched me narrowly. As I conceived Mosely's addresses would be accepted by Mrs. Morrison for her daughter, I avoided every attention to Julia, and rather shunned than courted her society; though my heart murmured, I was sensible I did right. I therefore more frequently chatted with the other ladies; and Miss Halliday often contrived to draw me into arguments with her alone, and then compliment me by giving up her opinion to mine.

Where is the man, my dear sister, that is free from vanity where your lovely sex is concerned? I had seen little of the world,
still

still less of the female part of it: I was therefore pleased and gratified by Miss Halliday's politeness, and was insensibly drawn on to shew her particular notice. Thompson took every opportunity to affront me by contradiction and ridicule. I bore a good deal, not to disturb the peace of the company; but at length his insolence became so intolerable, that I was compelled one evening to tell him I could no longer brook his behaviour, and that immediately on our arrival at St. Helena, I expected he would give me the satisfaction a gentleman had a right to demand from unprovoked ill treatment. He gladly accepted the challenge, and from that time behaved with more decency, though rudely enough.

One morning I was sitting in the stateroom, a book in my hand, though not just then attending to its contents, when Miss Julia entered. Seeing me, she would have withdrawn. I run and caught her hand. "Do not let me drive you hence, Miss

Morrison: I will call Mr. Mosely, who is just gone on the quarter-deck."

"And for what, Sir, should you call Mr. Mosely?" said she, evidently surprised; "I have no business with him."

"Ah! Miss Julia," returned I, "do not seek to disguise from me what is so palpable to every one."

"I really do not understand you, Mr. Oswald. I use no disguise, for I have no secrets. Mr. Mosely is nothing to me, nor have I any concern with him more than with any other gentleman in the ship. You will pardon me, Sir, but I must think your insinuations do me a great injury."

"If so, Madam, I sincerely entreat your pardon; but I own I thought ——"

I stopped.

"Thought

"Thought what, Sir?"

"That Mr. Mosely was so happy as to be particularly distinguished by Miss Morrison."

"You are in a great error, Sir; I am sorry you have no more discernment: but (smiling) where a person's attentions are so entirely devoted to one, they are apt to overlook little occurrences that may happen between others."

Saying this, with a slight courtesy, she left the room.

When I began to consider what had passed, I found a glimmering of hope arise in my heart. I was certain she had too much candour and sincerity to have denied her partiality for Mr. Mosely in such strong terms, had she really felt an inclination for him. The passion I had been endeavouring to stifle, now burst out more strongly than

ever. I was no longer assiduous about Miss Halliday, or any one; my whole soul was devoted to Julia, although I never dared breathe a sigh in her presence.

In a few days after this conversation we arrived at St. Helena. Mrs. Morrison gave me a very polite invitation to her house: we all attended her to it, but did not enter with her. As we returned, Mr. Thompson said to me, "You see that rising hill, meet me to-morrow at six o'clock; we can then look for a convenient place."

I promised to be punctual. We met; two others with us. Both fired together: his ball lodged in my left thigh; I fell. I was immediately assisted by the surgeon, the ball extracted, and I was carried to the first tavern at hand. The news soon blazed over the town. A servant was sent by the ladies from the Governor's, to know my situation, and enquire if I could bear a removal. The surgeon answered in the affirmative; and the
next

next morning a litter was sent, and I was taken to the Governor's house, put to bed, and a nurse ordered to attend me. Soon after, the Governor came in, a very respectable gentleman. He thanked me for my politeness to his wife and daughter, requested I would consider his house as my home, and assure myself of every attention my situation called for. Mrs. Morrison next paid me a visit, and expressed her surprise at the event which had taken place. I thought it my duty to be explicit with her.

"And had you not any particular pretensions to Miss Halliday?" asked she.

"None in the world, Madam," I replied; "but I could not support premeditated insult."

"Well," said she, "we must not talk. I hope you will have no fever, and then you will soon get well."

However, before night the agitation of my spirits brought on a very violent fever. I was delirious for three days, and in extreme danger: but youth and a good constitution enabled me to struggle through it. When I recovered my senses, I found Mrs. Morrison by my bed side. She kindly rejoiced to see me better. I mended so fast, that in about a week I was enabled, with assistance, to get into the drawing-room, and was congratulated by the charming Julia on my recovery.

In the course of conversation the Governor asked me some questions relative to my family, connexions, and my prospects in India. I mentioned every particular he wished to know of my connexions, and added the uncertainty we were in respecting the destiny of my uncle Seymour.

“ Good God ! ” cried Mrs. Morrison,
“ are you nephew to Harry Seymour ? and
did

did you never receive an account of his death?"

"No, Madam," I replied, "we never did."

"That is very strange," said she, "because I know an account was sent home to his elder brother; and I understood, his little property, about three thousand pounds, was remitted to him likewise."

She then told me my uncle Henry was exceeding intimate at her father's, in Madras; that on his first coming to India, he had been fortunate, and obtained in about two years seven thousand pounds. Within that time his brother wrote him of his father's death, and that his sister had a daughter. "I well remember," added she, "he remitted to his brother, through my father's hands, two thousand pounds, one thousand a present to his sister, the other thousand between his two brothers. In about a twelve-

month after this, going one evening to a ball, he overheated himself in dancing, and died within three days of a frenzy fever. My father wrote an account of his death to his brother; and I am very confident his remaining effects were transmitted to him."

I fear, from this relation, my dear sister, our uncle has not used us well. I leave it to your prudence how far we should interfere in the business.

I must now return to my situation at the Governor's. I grew better daily, but was still very lame; and as my passion for Miss Morrison daily increased, my spirits remained very languid and depressed. Meantime Mosely made a declaration of his love for Miss Julia, expecting, from his family and connexions, who, he knew, would not disapprove of the alliance, his addresses might be received. The young lady was consulted, and she gave an absolute negative, which was acceded to by her parents, who were deter-

determined not to force her inclination in favour of any one.

The ship was now to proceed on her voyage, but the family insisted upon my remaining there until I was in perfect health. I had not resolution to refuse so kind an offer. The ship sailed without me; but e'er she had been gone a week I repented: my affection for Miss Morrison made me miserable.

A few days ago arrived here two India-men, one going to Madraſs, the other on her return to England. I resolved to embark in the former, and took an opportunity to acquaint Mrs. Morrison and the Governor of my intention.

"You are then tired of us," said she, with a smile.

"Ah! no, Madam; but I am tired of myself, ashamed of the trouble I have occasioned

caſioned in your family, and unhappy that I have only bare acknowledgments to offer in return."

" You are a proud young man, and above being obliged to your friends, then," ſaid the Governor; " but there is more in this than we know of. You are anxious to raiſe a fortune, and perhaps would reject a moderate ſituation."

" No, Sir," I replied, " I am not ambitious; I only wiſh for a competency."

" That I can offer you, then, on this iſland; I can make you my Secretary, alſo give you a place worth 500l. a year. You may trade with your little capital, and ſoon increaſe it through my recommendations."

This offer was very tempting, yet I heſitated.

" Very

"Very well," cried Mrs. Morrison, "I see how it is, you *will* leave us; believe me, Mr. Oswald, we do not wish to force you."

Unable to bear this reproof, with great emotion I confessed the true state of my heart, and my motives for being desirous to quit St. Helena. The Governor, to my great surprise, was pleased with me.

"I will, in return for your frankness, Mr. Oswald, be equally sincere with you. Mrs. Morrison and my daughter were prejudiced in your favour before we knew any thing relative to your family. When your life was despaired of, I enquired of the Captain every particular concerning you. He gave me such an account of your character and connexions as confirmed those prejudices. Your illness discovered a secret neither you nor my daughter intended should be known; but in that moment both were off their guard. Mrs. Morrison's knowledge of your late uncle is likewise in your favour; but
you

you are both young. If you will remain here one year, and your conduct shall be such as to justify us in giving you our daughter, we shall make no objections; but we shall look upon ourselves as free and at liberty to retract this conditional consent, whenever we see reason for so doing. We know we can depend on the prudence and honour of Julia, to be guided in that respect to our wishes. Reflect on what I have said, and determine for yourself."

"Dear Sir, I require no time for reflection; I accept your generous and conditional offer with transport; and I solemnly promise never to endeavour by direct or indirect means to engage the affections of Miss Morrison until authorized by you."

"Then, my good Oswald, this is your resting-place; *we will* depend upon *your honour*."

Thus,

Thus, my dear sister, have I given you an account of my present situation and delightful prospects; grant Heaven they may be realized. Mrs. Morrison thinks you entitled to the thousand pounds designed for your mother; also the share of your uncle's effects sent home; and that you have a very good authority from her to claim it. You will act in this affair as Mr. Menville may judge most proper; all my claims I resign entirely in your favour.—To-morrow the Lord Howe sails for England.—Pray write me the first opportunity.—My affectionate respects to Mr. Menville, Miss Ellis, and all your friends.—I address my father by this same opportunity. Ever most sincerely,

My Dear Emily,

Your affectionate brother,

HENRY OSWALD.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I HAVE this day received your letter, my beloved friend, and sincerely congratulate you on your return to England. I forgive Lady Wentworth the theft she has committed in taking you to Wentworth Park, as I know, in her situation, I should have done exactly the same thing. Pray give me credit for my candour, when it militates against my own wishes. I had been visiting round the neighbourhood, within ten miles of us, to search for a cottage, to no purpose, and
now

now behold you have found one for yourself, far enough from me. Cruel Mrs. Menville, cannot you divide your time between us? must I ever remain thus distant from the friend, whose sentiments and example I wish to imitate? And, to complete my mortification, find myself *compelled* to decline an invitation I would with joy accept if *I could*. But, alas! I am not permitted; a situation, interesting at present to my family, and which will very shortly prove so to me in its effects, impedes my wishes, and justifies the apprehensions of my friends, as to preclude all thoughts of a journey. I have, however, insisted upon Miss Neville's going; and who do you think will be her escort? (for Colmore will not leave me;) Martin. He was here this morning when your letter came; and hearing of our difficulties, offered to accompany Miss Neville; my mother's maid will attend her, and return by the stage. I had not courage to refuse the poor fellow, though I think he is wrong; for surely there are no hopes for *him*! And so this Paradise is
in

in Lady Wentworth's neighbourhood. Happy woman! Yet, thank Heaven, it is not in Wales: I dare not murmur, though much dissatisfied.

I thank you for Harry's letter. I hope he will soon be happily settled. But what shall we think of that uncle of your's? If he has concealed his brother's letters and remittances, what a horrid wretch he must be. I never loved him. He blasted the favourite wish of my heart; he brought misery on my dearest friend: in short, his whole conduct has been guided by detestable ambition and avarice; and from such a disposition, every evil action may be expected. My father advises you to send him a copy of your brother's letter, telling him a copy has likewise been sent to him, and request an answer such as you may produce to Dr. Ellis, and send to your brother. As this answer is dictated, you must be guided in your further proceedings. I wish such a wretch to be made an example of.

I am

I am pleased with the prospect you have of St. Bernard's company, for she certainly will be at liberty soon; and I hope you give me credit for my generosity in wishing you a companion that may be likely to lessen the value of my friendship.

As Miss Neville will soon be with you, I trust that she will very quickly return with you and her sister; I must insist upon it you do not exceed three weeks. I have a right to expect a return of the same compliment I paid you; and in less than six weeks I look forward to a similar confinement: but let me not be disappointed, as you wish not to be answerable for the consequences. In three days Miss Neville sets off. Happy girl! I envy her feelings, to embrace a beloved sister; to see my dearest and most valued friends, equally friends to her and her's. Ah! what can be more delightful than such an interview; I am sure it requires all my philosophy and love for my husband, to reconcile me to the disappointment I am obliged to submit

submit to. I trust to your generosity to reward me for my self-denial, by writing me constantly until I have the happiness of seeing you. My best wishes to dear Lady Wentworth and family; and believe me ever

Your truly sincere

And affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE,

Your brother Anthony has received your letter, and will write by Miss Neville.—Your sister continues as amiable as ever.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

I AM just returned from Wentworth Park, where I escorted Miss Neville.—Sir Charles insisted that I should pass the night there, and I gladly consented. Mrs. Menville is more beautiful than ever: furrounded by her friends, restored to tranquillity, and free from anxiety, she is no longer the same woman as when I saw her in Cornwall, or at Lyons. There is a soft pleasing melancholy in her countenance, and a serenity in her

her manners, that interests every heart; and when she speaks, how elegant her language, what understanding and polished sentiments! Ah! Jack, I shall never love any other woman; yet I have no hopes; Harley will certainly be the happy, envied man: and though, from circumstances, I am well assured Lord Longfield loves her, I do not think he has the least chance: she has a mind superior to grandeur or titles; they can reflect neither honour nor pleasure on a being like her.

Miss Neville is an amiable young woman, about eight and twenty, with a very good heart and understanding; her person extremely agreeable, but——she is not Mrs. Menville. Lady Wentworth is handsome, lively, and pleasing; Mrs. Neville elegant, soft, and interesting: in short, they are a group of charming women. Mr. and Mrs. Moleworth are very worthy people; Sir Charles every thing a man ought to be, good and affectionate.

I am

I am unequal to the description of the scene among the ladies on their first meeting; female pens alone can do it justice. But, upon my soul, I was so oddly affected, that I run out of the room to recover myself, and remained till I thought they were more composed. On my return, Mrs. Menville addressed me with such expressions of kindness and esteem for my attentions to herself and friends, that I would fly to the antipodes to merit her approbation. She has taken a house, a cottage she calls it, in a very retired situation, nine miles from Wentworth Park. Nothing shall induce her to live in the gay world, she says. Her child is truly beautiful; it runs about, and talks a little. How engaging is the sweet Emily, so like her enchanting mother! "To the care of her child she devotes her future life." But, Ah! Jack, she will have other cares, I am sure she will. I have no very high opinion of women's stability; and although, if any woman does possess that virtue, I think it may be her, yet when this Harley comes,

this mirror of perfection, as I am told he is, a first love too, it is impossible, she never will persevere in widowhood. At all events I have not the most distant hope, and can only look forward to her happiness, independent of my own. What a self-denial! Pity me, Jack, for I am half mad at times, though I struggle for firmness and resolution.

I took leave of the family this morning. My emotions at parting from Mrs. Menville were visible; she saw it, and with a sweetness peculiar to herself, said, "When I return from Sudbury, Mr. Martin, I shall take possession of my cottage. I intend to open my doors to none but *friends*; in that number I shall be happy to consider Mr. Martin; and *with* Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth, or Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, you will always be received with pleasure and gratitude."

I kissed her lovely hand, muttered my thanks, and flew out of the room.—She spoke

spoke the word *friends* with an emphasis, so as to preclude all other claims on her favour. So here I am, after all my Quixotism, resigned to my destiny, and contented to be esteemed a *friend* only.

Oh! Jack, Jack, didst thou ever expect to see Bob Martin a convert to truth, sincerity, and friendship? Yet so it is. If she marries, I must give up all acquaintance. I can bear the disappointment of my own hopes, but I fear I have not fortitude enough to support the triumph of another, in possessing such a woman.—I must drop the subject.

I am now going to call on Mr. Smith, and likewise on one other person, to whom I am desirous of making all the reparation I can for former follies.

I rejoice to hear your affairs are in a train of accommodation, which will facilitate your
G 2 return

return to England.—Trust me, Jack, there is no experience we are so likely to profit by as that which is dearly bought; I therefore hope, both you and myself will henceforth become good members of society.

Your's, sincerely,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.**MISS NEVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.**

SAFELY arrived at Wentworth Park, my dear Madam, I take the first opportunity to obey your commands, and tell you how your charming friend looked. The feelings of our hearts often supersede ceremony. The moment I entered the room, I flew involuntarily to Mrs. Menville, and embraced her with streaming eyes; she received me with a sisterly affection. My poor Lucy now advanced towards me: I had not seen her. Oh! Madam, what did I feel at

G 3

that

that moment! Conscious of the evils I had brought on her and her's, I shrunk from her, fell into a chair, and was with difficulty preserved from fainting.

“Fanny, my dear Fanny,” cried she, much affected, “spare yourself and me: we must submit to the decrees of Heaven.”

This kind reflection restored me; we both wept, and soon recovered. I was then introduced to Lady Wentworth and Mrs. Moleworth, and apologized to the ladies for my inattention.

I had now time to look at our dear Mrs. Menville. She is paler and thinner; but with those disadvantages she is handsomer than any woman I know; and the sweetness and elegance of her manners must engage all hearts, if she had no beauty at all. How kindly did she receive me, how affectionate her enquiries after her dear Mrs. Colemore and family! I am grieved that she has absolutely

solutely taken a house at such a distance from us; but it being so near Wentworth Park, is, I suppose, one inducement. In the country nine or ten miles is nothing, only an hour and a half's drive, and her friends intend to reside chiefly here, I find.

Mrs. Menville has written to her uncle, and sent him a copy of her brother's letter, but never will take steps to compel him to do her justice. She says she does not want the money; her child will be rich enough; she never, therefore, will bring disgrace on a relation, for transactions so unjust, for any benefit to herself. "My brothers," added she, "may do as they please; but I hope interest will not lead them to a prosecution, which must in some degree reflect on the family."

I must own I admire her sentiments, and think them right; but with all the reasons she has to dislike this man, from his behaviour to her and Harry, I doubt I should scarcely

suffer him to enjoy his ill-gotten spoils in quiet, was I in her place. I am delighted with her little girl, and shall be its chief companion, I believe: she is a lovely child, and just beginning to talk, which I think the most engaging age. Her mother doats on her, and well she may.

My sister Neville is very low-spirited, and greatly altered; that, indeed, from the distresses she has suffered, I do not wonder at. She delights to talk of Captain Harley, and is an enthusiast in her gratitude: it is not surprising she should be such; for I scarce ever heard of a man so truly beneficent. I long to see him.

We are going to-morrow to view Mrs. Menville's cottage. On a certainty she has taken it for fourteen years. I smiled: she asked the reason. I told her there was very little probability she would reside so long in a cottage.

“ If

"If I live, I think I shall, unless there are inconveniencies in the house I am not aware of," answered she.

"But," said I, "consider the good fortune Miss Menville will be entitled to; you would not wish to bury her there, surely?"

"We will consider of that hereafter," replied she; "Emily has many years of infancy yet to look forward to, and many disorders to encounter with."

Tears came into her eyes. I changed the subject.

We are just returned from Grove-House, Mrs. Menville's future residence. It is indeed a delightful situation, but extremely retired. She is so very earnest to get into it, that I believe we shall visit you within the three weeks.

Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth look forward with hope and exultation to the union of Captain Harley and their friend; but they are delicately cautious not to mention his name, though Mr. Menville has now been dead four months; and, according to the fashionable mode of mourning, she will change her weeds soon, and then there can be no impropriety surely in her receiving him as a friend.

I have some news for you. Sir Charles has this morning had a letter from a gentleman at Boulogne. Old Shepherd is dead; and it comes out that he has mortgages on Mr. Menville's estates that are not sold, and in all probability Mr. Menville's own money was supplied for the purpose, as there was a great deficiency in the cash expected from the tenants. Mrs. Shepherd, a stranger to the language, and not knowing what is become of her daughter, is about to return again to England.

Sir

Sir Charles Wentworth will accompany us to Sudbury, as Mrs. Menville requests him and Mr. Colemore to be trustees for her child, and take all her affairs out of her uncle's hands.

All this family, my dear Madam, join in the kindest and most perfect good wishes for your health and happiness, with

Your ever obliged,

And affectionate,

FRANCES NEVILLE,

LETTER XX.

CAPTAIN HARLEY

TO SIR CHARLES WENTWORTH.

AFTER a tedious passage, and more disagreeable journey, owing to the breaking down of our carriage, five miles from any town, we are safely, and without any injury to our persons, arrived at the hotel in Jermyn-Street. Mr. Sackville will be with you in a few days. How hard is it, dear Wentworth, that the person most anxious to be of your party, dares not venture to approach your house? I am really miserable.

ferable. When deprived of hope, I resigned myself to my unfortunate destiny; and tho' bereft of happiness, I became tranquil and composed; but now, by an unexpected event, I am at liberty to indulge those feelings I have so long repressed, and am agitated by ten thousand hopes and fears. O! Wentworth, should I ever be so happy as to call that charming woman mine, how perfect will be my felicity! In point of fortune I am greatly her inferior; but *that*, I am sure, will only be a secondary consideration, and never will influence a mind like her's. Lord Longfield, I know, is passionately fond of Mrs. Menville, and he has a thousand advantages over me, fortune, title, person, and a truly-respectable character: yet such is his honour and delicacy, he assured me he considered my addresses as a prior right, and never would presume to urge his suit, whilst there was a probability mine might be accepted. Generous man! I hope, *should* I be successful, my happiness will not be productive of pain to him.

I have

I have had a letter from the Count this morning. That nobleman and his charming daughters are at Madrid. He hopes soon to congratulate himself on Antonia's marriage with the Duke de Solis, which is the favourite wish of his heart; and then how happy he should be to visit his English friends. That worthy nobleman has my best wishes for the success of his; for, notwithstanding the Duke's improper conduct respecting myself, he is in very general estimation at Madrid, and has many very good qualities. Antonia is a captivating woman; whoever has the honour to call her his, must be a happy man.

To-morrow I intend to fix my little protégé at a school near town. Poor little fellow, he is excessively fond of me, but seems much disconcerted nobody understands him but myself and Clayton.

We shall go down to Sudbury three days hence. Ah! how painful will be my reflections,

fections, how delicious my hopes! I wish to see my dear Mrs. Colemore, also to make myself an interest, if possible, with Mr. and Mrs. Oswald. I must engage all my friends in my behalf against the hour on which the future happiness of my life depends. - The day six months from Menville's death I shall write. O! Wentworth, dear Wentworth, second my wishes with the warmth of a friend, of a brother; think what I have at stake.—Clayton joins me in every good wish to the ladies and yourself; make our best respects, and be assured I am on all occasions,

Your faithful and obliged,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

I hope Mrs. Neville gets better in health and spirits: she ought to be so with such desirable companions. Be so good to tell her I shall endeavour to settle all her affairs with her tenant, and every other command of her's in which I can be of service.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

SIR Charles has doubtless informed you, my dear Lady Wentworth, that we are happily at Sudbury, without either fatigues or accidents. Mrs. Colemore was delighted to see us, and we all shed tears of joy at meeting. My brother and his lady were there ready to receive us. I am much pleased with Mrs. Oswald, and though her choice was rather a precipitate one, yet when we reflect on the vivacity of the French, and how eagerly they pursue a project once formed,

ed,

ed, the wonder is in some measure done away. She is really a very agreeable woman, though many years older than Anthony; she offered me her sisterly affection, in terms so polite and friendly, as much increased my esteem for her; she lamented the distance between us; I assured her it was trifling, and I hoped would be of little consequence, as we might be inmates of each other's houses, alternately; this arrangement appeared to please her. My brother, I find, makes frequent excursions to London, and remains two or three days, I fear she will find him a man of the world, and not a Mr. Colemore, or a Sir Charles Wentworth; however, a French woman can bear those things, because constancy in a husband is seldom expected with them; but I wish, for both their sakes, he may grow a little domesticated. They are all very angry I did not bring Emily; I told them you positively refused to part with her—they call you a monopoliser. Mrs. Neville is much pleased with the house taken for her, she takes possession

session of it next week, with her sister and children; may her future days be peaceful and happy. Captain Harley and Mr. Clayton have been down at Sudbury these ten days past, and left it only the day previous to our arrival. They are gone to spend a week with a friend of Clayton's, and then proceed to Wentworth Park. Mr. Clayton's house has been newly painted, and not yet proper to be inhabited. Captain Harley has settled Mrs. Neville's business, and paid Mr. Colemore for her seven hundred and thirty pounds, the moiety of what was due for rent from her estate. I thought she looked extremely hurt, that Harley had given it to Mr. Colemore.

"She was very much mortified she should continually trouble him, but she supposed they should very seldom see him now."

"Oh yes, cried Mr. Colemore, he used to reside a great part of his time with Mr. Clayton, and I hope he will not forget his
old

old correspondent; she has given him some hours at my expence, and I shall expect he returns them to me in person."

Colonel Huntley did me the honour of a visit this morning; he is a polite sensible man, and I am pleased the estate is in such good hands. From what we can learn here, Shepherd has behaved infamously in the trust Mr. Menville bestowed upon him—but he is no more, and I shall never trouble his widow nor myself, to investigate matters that could only prove a source of vexation to both. Sir Charles and Mr. Colmore have acceded to my wishes; I have made over to them, in trust for my child, every thing Mr. Menville died possessed of; paying me my jointure, fifteen hundred a year, there will not be six hundred remaining; such depredations have been made on a fortune of nearly seven thousand a year, when I married, besides a large property in the funds, all of which is drawn out; yet, as there will be a long minority, and every shilling shall accumulate, (for I will

will support my child at my own expence) she will be an exceeding good fortune when she comes of age. Sir Charles will return to you on Saturday; no persuasions can induce him to exceed his purposed time—happy pair! with what transport have I beheld his eyes dwell with fondness on those of his wife; how has he exulted, when her charming conversation engaged the attention of the company—how observant of every wish of her's, that could communicate pleasure! oh, my dear Lady Wentworth, your's is a union of minds, of hearts which can know no decrease of affection, since founded on mental accomplishments, and daily supplied by good sense, and good humour on both sides. In a married life I have always thought there must be a mutual forbearance, a mutual accommodation to procure happiness, an observance of the most minute things that can be supposed to give pleasure; it is from the neglect of trifles, that many disagreements arise in a wedded life, both expect too much, and give too little, and in consequence, trivial

vial matters create disputes, 'till, in the warmth of argument, expressions escape on both sides, seldom forgiven, and never forgotten, which occasion a pique and resentment, often productive of the most serious consequences. I have observed, with the utmost satisfaction, that in your conduct towards each other, nothing of this kind ever appears; you have, my dearest friend, the fairest prospect for continued felicity I ever beheld; persevere in your present sentiments, and you have nothing to apprehend. I pity Mrs. Neville, her spirits are depressed beyond any thing I ever saw. She looks at me sometimes with such an expression in her eyes, as really hurts me; she knows little of my heart, if she supposes me any obstacle to her wishes; on the contrary, I wish her success with the man she prefers. How dangerous is gratitude, when man is the object! a feeling, sensible heart, is lost before you know its weakness, being misled by one idea you think right to encourage, because founded on a proper principle; you are far gone in a tender

tender passion when you deceived yourself, and supposed it was the effect of gratitude only. I, my beloved friend, have experienced how far a sense of grateful ideas may work upon a mind of sensibility. You know the sentiments of my heart; when I married Mr. Menville, I scruple not to say I preferred another; but the generous offers made to me; the advantages held out to my family, the delight of obeying my father, and making him happy, were such powerful motives, that I should have despised myself, if an indulgence of a preferable love had biassed my mind to regard my *own* feelings *only*. I married with a grateful heart, how soon was that ripened into love! in the hour of sorrow, of reproach, when deserted by my husband, and exposed to the censure of the world, I still loved the father of my child, and looked forward with hope to a reconciliation; my hopes are blighted, I have therefore transferred every tender feeling, I have compromised every good I hope for now in this life, in the felicity of my Emily; in her are
centered

centered all my earthly expectations of happiness; grant, heaven, they may be realized! you will have the goodness, my dear friend, to let your steward call sometimes at Grove House, and see that the workmen dispatch their business, for I long to be settled. If we may judge from circumstances, Mrs. Colemore will soon be confined; I cannot leave her 'till the dreaded event is over. Mr. Colemore is extremely attentive and affectionate, they are a happy couple, and the worthy Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, are delighted beyond expression. I hope Mr. Sackville is with you by this time; pray take care you do not spoil Emily; remember, she is not to be too much indulged. My best compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Moleworth; I am ever, my dear Lady Wentworth,

Your obliged and affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

JOY to you, my dear Lady Wentworth, on the return of Sir Charles, accompanied by such good news; Mrs. Colemore was brought to bed yesterday afternoon of a lovely boy, a fortnight sooner than she expected, both herself and child are exceeding well. Colemore is out of his wits with transport; Doctor and Mrs. Ellis thankful to heaven for the blessing; indeed we are all in heroics. Sir Charles cannot be detained another day—I hope in less than three weeks to follow him. I had a letter yesterday from
my

my uncle, he positively denies receiving any remittances or account of his brother's death; talks loudly of punishing the author of such invidious reports, and seems to be very angry. He is not pleased with my intention of taking *my* affairs out of his hands; accuses me of ingratitude, levity, and I don't know what besides; thinks no man more entitled to take care of my business, than himself; reflects on my dear father's memory for the same ungrateful conduct in the disposition of his will, &c. His letter only confirms me in my determination to pursue my first design, which I shall do with firmness, avoiding, if possible, any quarrel with him; and as to the effects of my uncle Seymour, which ever way they are disposed of, I shall make no further enquiry; Anthony does not seem to be so quietly disposed, but I entreat him to be silent, until he hears again from his brother. Adieu, my dear friend, my best respects to all your family.

Your's sincerely,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER XXIII.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

PRESENT my best love and warmest congratulations to Mrs. Colemore, and do you, my dearest friend, accept the grateful thanks of Sir Charles and myself, for your attention to him whilst he was your happy companion; he writes himself to Mr. Colemore; I rejoice in the happiness of Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, with my whole heart. Sir Charles found, on his return here, Mr. Sackville, Captain Harley and Mr. Clayton; a pretty quantity of beaus for one lady (my

aunt

aunt forming no pretensions) yet would you believe it, so thoroughly are the days of flirtation at an end, and the love of admiration subdued, that I flew to the arms of my husband with transport, and the remainder of the day had neither eyes nor ears for any one but him. What folly in an old married woman! this morning I began to think how ridiculous I had behaved, but mine is an incorrigible heart, for whenever he appears, it flies to meet him, though I observe more decorum than on his first appearance after eight days of absence. Indeed there is nothing I think so disgusting, as an apparent fondness; complaisance, attention, and a desire to please, may be expressed a thousand ways, without drawing particular observation, and I am quite angry with myself, for being so unguarded yesterday. Your house is ready for your reception as soon as you please; little Emily asks for her mamma daily, and I am obliged to court her very much, to consider me in that light. We have had a letter from Lord Longfield, he returns in less than a

month to England; he is, he says, so truly a Briton, as to find no happiness out of his own country, and every observation he makes on the different governments, manners, customs, inhabitants, and even amusements in other countries, confirms his prejudices, or rather his judgment, in favour of his own. 'Tis true, he adds, you meet with worthy persons of every description, abroad; your ideas are enlarged, you are more liberal in your sentiments of men and manners, and were it only to draw a just comparative view, young men of fashion should visit the continent, but not until they are thoroughly acquainted with the government of Great-Britain, and have taken a tour through their own country. Sir Charles and Captain Harley are united in the same opinion; the former said,

“ He had often blushed for his countrymen, when occasionally asked for particulars relative to their own constitution in England, or descriptions of towns and their different manufactories, by intelligent curious people abroad;

abroad; he has seen them unable to answer, and entirely uninformed in such matters, as no Englishman, leaving his own country, to visit others, should be ignorant of: but the great folly is taking a young man from college, and sending him directly to travel, without being perfectly acquainted with the local advantages he derives from being born a Briton. Abroad, he imbibes false prejudices, erroneous principles, a contempt for his own country, and a fondness for the frivolities of others, without deriving any benefit to his understanding, or improvement in his manners. Too frequently the heart is corrupted, and he returns to injure the peace, or poison the minds of those unhappily connected with him. This is an evil," added Sir Charles, "that calls aloud for reformation, and those persons who have the care of youth, should pay more attention to the cultivation of their minds and morals, than merely studying Greek and Latin, to make a few orations, which are, generally speaking, forgotten as soon as they are pronounced."

Thus much I remember of the conversation, because delivered by my husband; and like a good wife, I implicitly subscribe to his opinions.

I enclose a letter, which I think is from your worthy St. Bernard; you must have seen in the papers of last week, that the convent doors are opened for such as chuse to quit them; I hope this letter brings you intelligence of her design to quit France, and reside with you. See in this wish, if I deserve to be styled a monopoliser, when I am desirous you should have a companion of such merit, as will assuredly lessen my consequence in your neighbourhood—judge if I do not prefer your happiness to my own gratification; indeed I should despise myself, if I could be so selfish. Tell my dear Mrs. Colemore, when you name the day of your return; I will come two days previous to *that*, to *visit her*, and conduct you back to Wentworth Park. *All* in this family present every

every good wish for the health of our friend, and the most affectionate and respectful remembrances to the dear Mrs. Menville, who is in truth a *monopoliser* of every one's affections.

Sincerely your's,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

H 4 LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

THAT we quitted you with much regret, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am sure you must be sensible of, and it is a little hard upon sincere and affectionate hearts, that there is a necessity for separation; but what is the distance of seventy or eighty miles, to friends? it will only draw us the closer by and bye, for I shall expect you to stay with me a *long time*, when able to take a little journey, Mr. Colemore and your sweet boy of the party, that there may be no drawbacks

backs upon our felicity, so that in reciprocal visits, we may spend much of our time together. On our arrival at the park, we found only Sir Charles and Mr. Sackville, the gentlemen, with Mr. and Mrs. Moleworth, were gone to town; the last mentioned return in a fortnight, the others, I suppose, will go to Sudbury, and visit you.

On Tuesday I take possession of my house; within a month I expect the worthy St. Bernard, and soon after I intend to inoculate my dear child—what an undertaking, my heart sinks at the idea, but it must be done. We expect Lord Longfield every day on a visit, I hope it will be deferred 'till my removal. Mr. Sackville is exceedingly fond of Mrs. Neville, was there not so great a disproportion in ages, I am persuaded he would make her an offer; he is really a worthy man, and doats on Sir Charles and his lady, like a father. I have received a most obliging letter from Lady Hartwill, which I have answered, and requested she and her sister

H 5

would

would honour me with their company, to spend some time at my cottage; Lady Wentworth and her steward have had it furnished exactly as I could wish, elegantly, neat and tasteful, but not fine; I have regulated my household; Patty I shall keep for Emily; a very worthy person, who is recommended as house-keeper, and to attend me; a cook, house and laundry maid—a neat post-chaise, with a postillion, one footman and a gardener, compleats my establishment. I look forward, my dear Mrs. Colemore, to tranquillity, if the Almighty spares my child, and grants me life to see her settled, these are all the blessings I have to wish for on earth. I shall impatiently expect to see you; pray make my grateful compliments to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, and love to Mrs. and Miss Neville. Kiss your sweet boy for me.

I am, ever affectionately your's,

E. MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. MENVILLE.

PARDON, madam, a presumption which I painfully feel, and which, perhaps, may incur your displeasure, the severest of all punishments. I have long repelled the ardent wishes of my heart; I have condemned myself to silence, to absence, that I might not wound your delicacy; deign then to pardon an intrusion I can no longer repress; condescend, with your usual goodness, to remember a man, who in every different situation you have known, has been devoted to

you alone ; a man who feels himself unworthy of you, according to the sordid maxims of the world, and how much more so in comparative merit ; yet remember, ah ! remember the time, the happy hour, when Mr. Oswald permitted my addressee, and bid me look up to you with hope. Heavy has been my disappointments, doubly so, because you were not happy. You are now restored to your friends and the world ; far be it from me to ask more at present, than permission to accompany Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth, on their next visit ; you will find me obedient to your commands, and not presuming on your condescension. Propitious be your silence ; for I will not dare to request a line, but entreat you madam to believe, that to you is devoted the remainder of my days.

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO FREDERIC HARLEY, ESQ.

SIR,

I shall evermore think myself obliged by the kind remembrance of my friends; to you I have particular obligations, for the interest you have taken in all my concerns. There was a time (it would be an affectation, I disdain to deny it) when I considered Captain Harley in the dearest and nearest point of view, and I scruple not to confess, that in contributing to his happiness,

I should

I should have found *my own*. You know the motives which prevailed on me to change my sentiments, and *I know* I was justified in your unbiassed judgment. I must now, sir, trust again to your justice, even if against your own wishes. I shall, with the sincerest pleasure, receive you as a visitor with our common friends; I shall be happy to acknowledge my obligations for an offer which might gratify the pride of *any* woman, and perhaps I am the only woman so situated as to find it impossible to accept it; but it must be so. I never shall marry again, 'tis a fixed resolution; I have many strong reasons for my determination, and I flatter myself you are so well acquainted with my principles, that when I have told you I have made up my mind, and devote my life to the care of my child *only*, and never will suffer *any* other duty to interfere with that I owe to *her*; I trust you will acquiesce with the propriety of my resolution on this subject, and give up every idea which may militate against it. Under that conviction, and in
the

the company of my friends, I shall, with the highest pleasure, receive Captain Harley ; in any other light I admit no man. I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your obliged, and sincere

humble servant,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

A Thousand thanks, my dear Mrs. Colemore, for the few lines you have kindly written, and for the good account you give me of yourself and child. I begin now to *taste* of happiness, when I can rejoice in the felicity of my friends; yet as there must ever be a drawback on human felicity, I received a letter yesterday, which has given me great pain, from Captain Harley. Perhaps, as *you* are his confidante, you may be no stranger to its contents. I have been obliged

to

to give a negative to his wishes : it has hurt me exceedingly, to consider that I have given him pain ; I have been unfortunately the cause of distress and uneasiness to those I most esteem, not voluntarily indeed, yet nevertheless I consider myself as the cause, and greatly deplore the effect. I hope he will be reconciled to my determination ; why will he not turn to Mrs. Neville, there is an affectionate heart open to receive him ; then we might unite in friendship without any alloy ; at present I am uneasy and dissatisfied ; I am sensible of my obligations to Captain Harley, I respect, I esteem him, but no more. Let him entertain the same sentiments for me, and he will restore my peace, and render my happiness complete.

This morning I had a visit from Mr. Martin, he congratulated me on my recovered tranquillity, and improved health, he said,

“Content

"Content was the greatest beautifier in nature," he was happy to see my bloom restored.

I thanked him cordially for all his kindness to me.

"I do indeed deserve some praise," said he, "for being so abstracted, as to rejoice at an event, which throws me for ever at a distance, and makes Harley happy; I know him not, but his merit is unquestionable, since approved by Mrs. Menville."

"Captain Harley," replied I, "is certainly a very amiable man, and I was once very near being connected with him for life; particular circumstances intervened, and prevented it; since that time I have considered Captain Harley as a friend, as I do you Mr. Martin, (how his face was animated) but in no other point of view. I never shall know a second marriage, it is a resolution formed on principle, and never will be broken. It will

will give me pleasure to see Captain Harley, Mr. Martin, Lord Longfield, with any of my friends, but in that light *only*. I will never receive lovers, nor will my doors be open a second time to persons of that description, however, I may be obliged to their preferable esteem." Martin's eyes absolutely sparkled with pleasure.

"I accept with pleasure, madam, your permission to wait on you *with* other friends; I will never infringe upon your laws, and however painful to my feelings, I condemn myself to eternal silence, on any subject displeasing to you."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Martin, and I repeat, that under such restrictions, I shall be ever happy to see you, and remember with pleasure, how much I am indebted to your kindness and friendly attentions." Being alone, I did not ask him to dine with *me*, but I told him, "if he would do me a favour, he should call on Lady Wentworth,"

I wrote

I wrote a line by him, and I dare say he will take his dinner there, for they wish to see him, and are much pleased with his behaviour to me and mine. How much happier must that young man feel himself, treated with kindness and respect by worthy characters; pursuing rational pleasures, unembittered by remorse or painful reflections; his fortune, his health unimpaired and his heart open to liberality and compassion, never failing resources of pleasure, where the power is equal to the will of doing good! ah! would to heaven our young men of quality would consider what happiness they might diffuse among many unfortunate families, with the sums they hourly dissipate in extravagance and gambling! what heart-felt pleasure, what blessings from the widow and fatherless might they derive to themselves, by bestowing a small part of that money to their relief, which is idly squandered, or transferred by gambling, from one sordid man to another, for I never can believe, but avarice is the foundation of deep play; and a propensity to
that

that destructive vice, deadens every feeling, destroys every virtue, and fits the mind for "treason, villainy, or murder."

I am sometimes uneasy about my brother's frequent visits to town; God forbid he should associate with the dissipated and idle young men that swarm in London. I think to introduce him to the acquaintance of Martin; no man is better qualified to shew him the rocks on which he may split, without care and resolution, than he is; and I have the vanity to think, he will take pleasure in being serviceable to my brother, on my account. Lord Longfield is at Wentworth Park; I have just had a line from Lady Wentworth, requesting I would dine with her to-morrow: I had rather have been excused, but to deny would look particular, I must, therefore comply.

I was interrupted by a most joyful circumstance, the arrival of my dear madam St. Bernard, a week sooner than I dared hope for,

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE.

for, but a respectable family, to whom she was known, coming to England, she gladly embraced the opportunity. I cannot express to you how happy I was to see her; Emily knew her the moment she spoke; she looked at her strangely at first, her dress being altered (though she is in black) but the tone of her voice, when she called her *Ma chère*, Emily, awakened her recollection; the dear child run to her. Mamma Bernard! cried she, jumping to kiss her; the good St. Bernard shed tears, nor was I unaffected. I have sent a letter to Lady Wentworth, having a very good apology to offer now, for not waiting on her to-morrow, and I know she will hasten here, being impatient to see my worthy nun: she desires never to be seen, but by my very particular friends; nor will she ever, she says, exceed the limits of my garden, orchard, and field; we have had a delightful walk there this morning; you will doat on her when you know her, she is already prepared to love you.

“Nothing, my dear madam,” said she, in our walk, “could have induced me to have quitted the convent, but the friendship you offered me ; for although that situation was not my preferable choice, yet I grew perfectly reconciled to it, and had not the smallest wish to return into the world ; but your friendship, your society was a blessing I could not refuse ; I know you will permit me to live to my own heart, and indulge me in the retirement proper for the situation I have lived in, and been devoted to ; my religious principles shall be strictly confined to my own bosom, my practice of them shall disturb no one ; your lovely child, I hope, you will commit to my care ; she will learn English and French together ; I promise myself the greatest happiness in being permitted to superintend her education.”

“And I, my dear madam, accept with thankfulness, your kind offer,” I replied, “on every occasion speak your wishes, and they shall be fulfilled.”

She

She embraced me with tears of gratitude;
“ Call me your Louisa, do not call me
madam; let me be your sister, your friend!”

Next week I shall begin to prepare Emily
for inoculation; pray for my success, my
dear friend, and that I may preserve my for-
titude under a trial so severe. The dear
Louisa desires I will present her best respects
to my good friends at Sudbury—Ah! here is
Lady Wentworth’s carriage. She has just
left us, rather displeased at my refusal to ac-
company her, but I know she will soon for-
give me. She was exceedingly rejoiced to
see the fair nun, whom she was so much
interested for, and kindly said she should have
an additional motive to visit me often, as
she could only hope to see her by coming to
the grove. She did not mention Captain
Harley, I therefore flatter myself he is con-
tented with my letter, and will not renew the
subject. Farewell, my dear Mrs. Cole-
more, my sincerest love to all my good
friends

friends at Sudbury ; remember, I expect you soon, and am your truly affectionate and obliged

EMILY MENVILLE.

This instant a letter from my brother, I expect him and his lady in three days—must they come unaccompanied ?

LETTER XXVIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my dear Mrs. Colemore, has hurt me exceedingly; to *deserve* the esteem of my friends has ever been the first wish of my heart, and now you upbraid me with "ingratitude, cruelty, and an undue pride;" good God! what a charge, "and does Doctor Ellis, does Mrs. Ellis, hold the same opinion?" You call upon me *warmly* to explain my motives for refusing Captain Harley, you shall be obeyed my dear severe friend, and if you will judge me with your usual

usual candour, I hope to stand uncondemned in your opinion.

When Captain Harley first paid his addresses to me, I was not nineteen; the partiality of my friends had taught me to believe I was more than tolerably handsome; my understanding was not below the generality of my sex, I was naturally cheerful, and my temper not a bad one; I, therefore, without being accused of too much vanity, might conceive it possible I should be the object of his wishes, and that he believed I could make him happy. He had those advantages to which I could form no objections; I esteemed, I own I loved him, and hoped to have been united to a man so truly amiable. When Mr. Menville thought fit to distinguish me, and my father requested me to break with Captain Harley, you well know the regret and sorrow which attended my obedience, but it was my duty to submit; the powerful reasons urged by my father and uncle, left me no alternative; it was to serve

my family, and obey a parent, I sacrificed my inclinations, and married Mr. Menville. When I became his wife, his attention to me and kindness to my family, won my gratitude and affection. In a very short time my inclinations accorded with my duty. I strictly adhered to the vow I made at the altar; neither Captain Harley nor any other man, engrossed my thoughts one moment. You know the infatuation which unhappily took place, I was neglected, insulted and despised, driven to a comparative poverty, and from the society of my friends. I endeavoured to support those evils with resignation: but my dear Mrs. Colemore, though affliction may not absolutely subdue the mind, it makes great ravages in the person, and, indeed, must hurt the temper. Though not yet twenty-three, sorrow has made me no longer young nor handsome; I can see great changes in my face, I can feel much difference in my temper; I am no longer the cheerful lively Emily Oswald.—I am grave, though not melancholy. I have the most perfect esteem
for

for Captain Harley, but I am dead to love; I should rejoice in his acquaintance as a friend, but him, of all men, I ought never to marry; I was suspected of an improper correspondence with him; the woman who prejudiced my husband with such ideas, scarcely stopped there, doubtless she made the same observations to all her acquaintance, and I have incurred the most shocking suspicions; would you, my dear friend, have me justify those suspicions, by uniting myself to the object of them? I repeat, then, of all men, I ought never to marry Captain Harley, and if not *him*, I *never* will marry *at all*. Do me justice, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am neither capricious nor ungrateful, I feel myself indebted to Captain Harley, but with a faded person, an altered temper, I should make him a poor return for his affection to me. There are many others would rejoice in being distinguished by him; *you know* those persons, direct his attentions, inform his judgment, and point out to him the road to happiness, with an amiable woman that

loves him. I shall be impatient for your answer, do not let me languish, I hope you will pardon me for not gratifying your wishes, and believe that it is from principle, from conviction *alone*, I act, and therefore am intitled to candour and a fair judgment. I have consulted my good Louisa on the subject, she evades giving her opinion; could I have a doubt upon my mind, I would be guided by your's, but indeed, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I can love no more; I cannot marry Captain Harley to do him justice; my whole affections are bestowed upon my child, I cannot divide them. Tell Doctor Ellis, tell your mother my real sentiments; I hope they will acquit me, or I shall be really unhappy. I hourly expect my brother and sister, do not be long after them; my mind is disturbed; how painful to a mind of sensibility, the idea of wounding the bosom of another. Adieu, my dear friend, let me hear from you speedily.

I am, most sincerely your's,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.**LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.**

I AM all astonishment. Is it possible Mrs. Menville can deserve the epithets of faithless and ungrateful? Can that amiable friend, to whom I have ever looked up with respect and admiration, can she be cruel and ungrateful? Impossible! I cannot, I will not believe it. Captain Harley is now in the house, the most unhappy of men. I have shewn your letter to him; I reprobate it entirely. Consider what you owe to an affection like his. When you were absolutely

engaged to him, with your father's permission and your own approbation, had he not a right to have insisted upon that engagement taking place? Yet to you, to your happiness, to the apparent elegance of a brilliant prospect, he gave up his prior right, *his own* hopes of *happiness* for ever! Is there no gratitude, no affection due to a generosity so unequalled? Even now he submits to your commands; though miserable and ill, he resigns himself to your decrees.

“Never,” said he, just now, “never will I intrude my wishes a second time on Mrs. Menville. If I have no interest in her heart, God forbid I should seek to influence her mind, or work upon her compassion for a man she no longer esteems. I will quit England for ever, when I can bear travelling; at present I am too much agitated.”

Indeed

Indeed he is ill. How unfortunate that he should have given his heart to the only woman on earth who could have rejected him! How will that obdurate woman answer it to Captain Harley's friends for making him miserable, depriving them of his society, and banishing him his country for ever? Sir Charles is grieved and mortified beyond expression. Mr. Sackville — No, I will not tell you, cruel as you are, I will not tell you what Mr. Sackville said of you. But go on; live for *yourself* only; persevere in those false delicacies which are to destroy the happiness of your friends; lessen the immense distance I have been accustomed to think there was between you and the rest of your sex; be no more than a common woman, fond of power, triumphing in the pangs of a worthy man, and gratified in pursuing fastidious notions that are to make others unhappy!

And is it to Mrs. Menville, to the dearest friend of my heart, I presume to write in

this style! Surely it cannot be. Mrs. Menville was my monitress, my example through life. The mistress of Grove-House is no longer kind, no longer generous or grateful; nor can I any longer esteem a woman who is assiduous to drive from her feelings the most noble virtues she formerly endeavoured to inculcate to others, both by precept and example.

I can write no more; my tears flow, my best hopes are disappointed, and a worthy friend, an universal friend to mankind, rendered miserable for life.

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HOW fallacious is hope! I entered this retirement with at least a prospect of tranquillity and ease: I am now most wretched. This morning I inoculated my dearest Emily. Judge what must be the feelings of a mother! The dear Louisa had succeeded in composing my mind by her excellent admonitions, when your letter came to throw me back into vexation and sorrow. Barbarous Lady Wentworth, have I indeed lost your esteem? Is your friendship for Captain

Harley superior to your love for me? Could you suppose I declined his generous offer from light or capricious motives? Do me more justice, my once-dear Charlotte.

I enclose a copy of my letter to Mrs. Colemore; if that does not moderate your resentment, and plead my cause successfully, I am unhappy indeed. In a pleasant retirement, in the bosom of my friends, I thought to have passed the remainder of my days in peace, to have devoted myself to the care of my child, if the Almighty is pleased to spare her to my prayers; and in the delights of friendship, to have recovered my lost peace. Why will not Captain Harley add to those pleasures I promised myself? Why will he, by an undeserved preference of me, neglect a tender, affectionate heart open to receive him? Indeed, indeed, my dear Lady Wentworth, Mrs. Menville is still the same; not one principle of affection or gratitude is lessened towards any of her friends: *she is not* cold or fastidious; on the contrary,

contrary, she painfully feels for the disappointments of others, and laments that she is compelled to appear ungrateful, and revolt against the advice of those, whose opinions in every other point would not admit of the least hesitation on her part.

The distress of my mind obliges me to resign my pen: you have wrung my heart with sorrow. Too unkind friend, adieu.

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I AM sorry, my dear Mrs. Menville, that for the first time in my life I am displeased with a letter of your's; yet know not what arguments to use that can induce you to resign your own opinions to those of your friends. If an unbounded affection, which has stood the test of time and situation; if a mind possessed of every virtue, every sentiment of honour and generosity; if a prior engagement never deservedly forfeited, and
a con-

a constancy almost unequalled; if to make the most amiable of men happy, to oblige, to gratify all your friends; if all these considerations fail to give weight to our wishes, and you will persevere in your severe resolutions, I have no more to say. I *must* love you; but I can no longer pride myself in being distinguished by the most noble, the most generous of her sex; perhaps my self-love may be gratified, that your superiority is lessened; and that, though I *may* love, yet I cannot view you with that respect and admiration as when I thought you possessed of all the virtues.

I am sorry to tell you, neither my father or mother are convinced by your reasoning; "a faded person, an altered temper!" Fie upon you, my dear Mrs. Menville; why not say, "I have a handsome jointure; I can live independent: Captain Harley has injured *his* fortune by acts of generosity, by giving to the widow and fatherless; why then should I marry a man whose fortune is unworthy

worthy of me ; perhaps he may be generous at *my* expence."

This explanation of your sentiments would silence us at once ; but the pretences you make, the reasons you adduce, carry no conviction with them. When sorrow and affliction assailed you, how bright your example ; adversity shewed you in the most shining point of view ; we looked up to you with wonder and admiration. Ah ! my dear friend, does prosperity harden the heart ? You are rich and independent ; are you no longer generous or compassionate ? Is not your heart capacious enough to admit love for two objects ? Have you not provided for your child ? Can the most rigid, the most scrupulous delicacy require more ? You tell me " to point out an affectionate heart open to receive him." You can dictate generosity and gratitude to *him*, yet will practise neither yourself. How blind we are to our own foibles ! But it is not necessary you should be *twice* a victim to gratitude ; if
your

your *heart* feels nothing in favour of Captain Harley, I have done for ever; but do not be too peremptory in your decision; think, reflect, and let your usual goodness and generosity determine.—My father writes you a few lines: do justice to his sentiments, which are dictated by a fatherly regard.—Our affectionate compliments to your amiable guest.—I am, and ever must be,

Your sincere,

And obliged,

E. M. COLEMORE.

My father has this instant received another letter from your brother Harry, which I enclose.—Pray remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Oswald.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

My dear Mrs. Colemore,

MY brother and sister are now with me; they urge, they entreat me to see Captain Harley: how easy to comply with their wishes, if to receive him as a friend was all that they require. Lady Wentworth is unjust; she has given me up; I have neither seen nor heard from her these three days. You, perhaps, have followed her example. I have no friends then left; Captain Harley has the happiness of having many;

many; his interest is dearer to them than mine. I am very unfortunate.

Your letter is this moment delivered to me, with Dr. Ellis's and my brother Harry's: I shall speak of that by and bye. Your severity has almost broken my heart. Can you believe me a base, ungrateful, mercenary creature? *Can* you suppose fortune had any share in my conduct or resolution?—Good God! what an expression; “he has injured *his* fortune by generosity to the widow and fatherless; perhaps he may be generous at *my* expence also.” Can you, do you think so meanly of me? O! no! it is impossible. You must know that I admire him, I respect him for his beneficence; and that Captain Harley, without one shilling, would be more respectable in my eyes than those that have millions, if not blest with *his* goodness of heart! It is not *his* want of merit, it is a consciousness of my own deficiencies to make him happy. I am not what I have been; he sees not, he knows not

not the alterations in my person ; he knows not, perhaps, that I have had a suspected reputation, and that marrying him would too probably confirm those suspicions. Could he bear such degrading conjectures ? Should not *I* feel humbled by every scrutinizing eye, and suspect every malicious glance was levelled at me ? I shudder at the idea. But *I will* consider, I will examine my heart, as your good father requires ; and if I can do justice to Captain Harley's merits——But let me not be hurried.—I know not what I can or ought to do.

My brother Harry is married to Miss Morrison much sooner than he could have hoped for. He is happy beyond expression ; and next year they propose to visit England. He has heard of his father's death, but every thing respecting my affairs he is ignorant of. I hope you will soon see the letter here, unless I am to be entirely given up by every one.

Sir

Sir Charles Wentworth has this instant left me: he has probed me to the heart. Captain Harley is really *very ill*; yet *he* is silent, he complains not, and submits without murmur or expostulation to my request.— O! my dear Mrs. Colemore, this silent resignation subdues me; my heart is not stubborn nor refractory. I will write to him; *he* shall decide for me.

My Emily, my dear child, has taken the infection; she is very poorly. The medical gentleman who attends her thinks the disorder will appear this night or to-morrow. Judge of my anxiety: every thing must be suspended now. Pray for me, my dear Mrs. Colemore. I can write no more.

Your affectionate,

And obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MY dear Mrs. Colemore, what have I not suffered for this week past! O! let me adore the mercy of God, that has granted my child to the prayers of a parent; and next gratefully express my obligations to the gentlemen of the faculty who have attended her. My poor Emily has been on the verge of the grave. The night I wrote you last she was seized with convulsions. The apothecary called in a physician, a friend of his: their attention and kindness I shall never forget:

5

forget: they preserved *her* life, they *saved* mine; and I have gained two worthy and amiable friends, whose characters, dispositions, and good sense, render them truly respectable, independent of their medical abilities. The dear creature is now out of all danger; the disorder has turned favourably; though very full, it is an excellent fort, and she will not, I dare say, be marked at all.

Congratulate me, my good friend, on an event so essential to my being.—Lady Wentworth forgot her displeasure: she flew to me in my distress, and staid up two nights with me. Her tenderness on this occasion has convinced me it is my happiness she seeks in all her wishes. I cannot be ungrateful to her, to you, and all my friends. No; I will this day write Captain Harley; if he still persists, after he has seen me, in requesting my hand, I will not refuse—at a proper time.

The dear, the good Louisa, was not in bed for five nights. How kind, is her
every

every action ; I really possess a treasure in her friendship. Ungrateful as we are, we often repine at events best calculated for our happiness. Had I not resided in the convent at Abbeville, I should never have known this most amiable woman.

I enclose a copy of my letter to Captain Harley ; my brother and sister are pleased with it : they have suffered great anxiety from their visit to me ; I hope, therefore, I shall detain them longer than they first intended, especially as Mrs. Oswald is excessively fond of Madame Louisa. Their mutual partiality is very natural, being countrywomen.

I have an answer from Captain Harley : he comes in a short time with my friends. I shall not close this letter until he has been here. The interview to me will be a painful one, but I cannot recede.

MRS.

MRS. MENVILLE TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

(ENCLOSED.)

Sir,

FEW things could give me pain equal to the knowledge that you are unhappy, and that *I* am the cause. I wrote you, I wrote my good friends, such reasons for declining the honour of your addresses, as I hoped would satisfy every one. To your candour, Sir, I am obliged; but my friends are displeased with me; I will not say they have *your* interest more at heart than *mine*, because *I cannot* be convinced an union with me can be productive of real good to you; but you shall judge for yourself. I will no longer resist the wishes, I may say *commands*, of those so truly dear and respectable to me: if you can accord with my sentiments; if you can bring yourself to view me in the light of a friend, I frankly own, it would be most desirable to me; for I assure you, both my person and disposition

are altered for the worse; and that I think there are very many amiable women, *one* in particular, not unknown to you, more calculated to make you happy than I can *now*. Consider the malignant censures of the world; consider that a wife of suspected reputation must be sunk in the esteem of that world, whatever justice her friends may be inclined to do her; recollect it is not now Emily Oswald, whose hand you wish for, but the degraded wife of Mr. Menville; neither young nor handsome, a widow, with a child, who will ever engross the chief part of her affections. Weigh all these considerations well before you see me, and then *you* shall decide for me.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your obliged,

And obedient servant,

EMILY MENVILLE.

CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. MENVILLE.

DEIGN, Madam, to accept my grateful acknowledgments for your condescension and invaluable letter. I embrace with transport the permission you have given me to wait on you; and I flatter myself I shall prove to you that it is the mind, the virtues, the unequalled delicacy, and propriety of manners Mrs. Menville has ever possessed, that has claimed my adoration. If I loved the beautiful Miss Oswald, I admire, I adore the charming Mrs. Menville beyond all power of expression. Sir Charles forbids me to say more. I shall soon be well; your letter laid on my heart will restore me to health and happiness.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Dear Madam,

Your obliged and devoted,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

I thought to have given you an account of my interview with Captain Harley, but am sorry to say he is not in a situation to quit his room yet; I did think my friends exaggerated his illness; I find the contrary, and am greatly concerned. I hope, however, a day or two will restore him.

I have written a few lines to your worthy father. I cannot support his displeasure; and (be angry if you please) but I must own his letter has had more weight with me than any thing else that has been offered on the subject.

My dear friend, oblige me with your company and Mr. Colemore's; my brother and sister earnestly request it: do not deny us, but answer this letter in person.—My best compliments to all your amiable companions; and believe me ever,

Your affectionate and obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.**MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. ELLIS.**

MY dearest mother, we got safe and in very good time last night to Grove House, and were received with transport by our dear friends. Mrs. Menville looks ill from her anxiety and fatigue, but her spirits are better than I have seen them these two years; and I doubt not but her looks will soon improve when her mind is at ease. The sweet Emily is a lovely child; her person not the least injured by her late disorder. Madame Louisa is very amiable and en-

gaging: she has a most perfect friendship for Mrs. Menville; who indeed, that knows her, but must have the same.

Captain Harley has not yet made his appearance here: joy being almost as fatal as grief, brought on a return of his fever, and for two days he was extremely ill. He is expected to-morrow with the Wentworths.

This house is really a Paradise; the situation beautifully romantic. I am not surprised Mrs. Menville is attached to it. Mrs. Oswald is very fond of her sister, but more so of the amiable nun; and they both doat on little Emily.—I am interrupted.

I could not find time, my dear Madam, to resume my pen until this evening. Our amiable friends have just left us, and carried off Mr. Colemore for a day or two. Sir Charles, Lady Wentworth, and Captain Harley came early in the day; Mr. Sackville is in town.

As

As they drove up the avenue Mrs. Men-ville was in tremors : I was apprehensive she would faint ; but she tried to exert herself. When they entered the drawing-room, Sir Charles led Captain Harley to her, whilst Lady Wentworth embraced me. Harley bowed, kissed her hand, but spoke not : she courtesied, and uttered a few words, not to be understood ; but trembled so violently, that her Ladyship ran to her relief, and congratulated her on Emily's perfect recovery. This gave a new turn to her thoughts, and she recovered her spirits. Harley overwhelmed the amiable Louisa with compliments and thanks for her attention to our friend. She, I saw, was exceedingly struck with his person and address. Indeed, I never saw him look more engagingly agreeable, though evidently weak and languid.

After dinner we sauntered away into the garden and orchard, and purposely contrived the charming couple should have a *tete à tete*. I believe he pleaded his own cause pretty

well, for when we met and returned to tea, I saw, by the animation of his countenance, he was highly delighted; and Mrs. Menville looked conscious, but not *unhappy*. Before they left us, Harley contrived to whisper in my ear, "My dear Mrs. Colemore, I have leave *to hope*; and that from your divine friend, is every thing I can wish for at present."

After they were gone, I congratulated her on the first interview, which she so much dreaded, being over.

"I do indeed," said she, "feel myself lightened of very painful apprehensions.—Poor Harley is but a shadow of himself; his fragile form and trembling emotions spoke more than volumes to my heart; that heart," added she, faintly, "is a traitor after all; for it beat with too much violence at sight of its old master, and convinced me, though we may suppress a flame, we cannot wholly subdue it."

"I then

“ I then flatter myself,” said I, smiling,
“ I shall see you both happy.”

“ I wish you may,” replied she, seriously.
“ I have acceded to his and my friends’ wishes, but I cannot say I am perfectly satisfied with myself, and that I think a bad sign, for I have hitherto lived free from self-reproach.”

“ Over delicacy only, my dear Mrs. Menville; and *that* is no virtue at all.— However, make yourself easy, under the certainty of having obliged all your friends.”

“ Do not, my dear sister,” said Mrs. Oswald, taking her hand, “ do not judge me with severity; every word you utter expressive of your disapprobation of second marriages, is a severe satire upon me.”

“ I beg your pardon, my dearest sister, but there is not the least similarity between your situation and mine; and therefore you

cannot be affected by any reflections I make."

"Indeed, sister," said Mr. Oswald, "I see not any reflections necessary, but what makes in Mr. Harley's favour; and he has my good wishes for his success."

He then announced his intention of spending a week in town. His lady looked disappointed, but prudently was silent. I fear she cannot expect to keep him much with her in the country; and a town house would run them very soon into ruinous expences; she must therefore submit to little excursions with the best grace she can.

And now, my dear mother, I hope we may congratulate ourselves that things are in a fair train for the happiness of our friends.

Mrs. Menville has just left me. I read to her what I had written. She was silent for some time: at length, looking earnestly at

at me, " You seem entirely to have forgotten the poor Mrs. Neville. What will she think when she hears I have permitted Captain Harley's visits? Ah! Mrs. Colmore, I can never enjoy bliss at the expence of another's feelings."

" I am persuaded," replied I, " that she has greatly subdued her attachment; for, from the moment you became a widow, she looked forward to your union with Captain Harley; and I own, since she came to Sudbury, I have always encouraged the idea out of kindness to her. I am sure, therefore, she will neither be surprised nor much affected at having those ideas confirmed."

She shook her head; and requesting her best love to you and all her friends, left me.—Fear not, my dear Madam, but she will soon get over all her delicate objections.

My little George thrives exceedingly; he and Emily are mighty good friends in the nursery.—My love and respectful duty to my father and friends; and I am ever,

Dearest Madam,

Your obliged

And affectionate daughter,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. ELLIS.

My dearest Madam,

ACCCEPT my grateful thanks for your kind letter, it has had great effect on Mrs. Menville; my father's and your approbation of her compliance with all our wishes, has given her much pleasure. Also Mrs. Neville's behaviour, and subsequent address to you, reconciles her to think of her union with Mr. Harley with much less reluctance;

luctance; she owns he is the only man on earth she could or would marry. I am glad to hear Mr. Martin is going abroad, there will be no impropriety certainly in his coming here to take leave of us, pray tell him we shall all be glad to see him. Mr. Oswald is in town, Sir Charles and Captain Harley are here every morning, and we meet every other day with Lady Wentworth, at our own house or her's. Mr. Sackville is returned, and out of his wits with joy, at the happy change of affairs here; he promises to accompany us back to Sudbury to see you, and visit Mrs. Neville. We have at length prevailed on Mrs. Menville to promise, that sixteen months from Mr. Menville's death, she will give her hand to the happy Harley, conditionally, that he resides at Grove-House; you may believe there was no difficulty in obtaining that request, or indeed any other, she chose to make. She said yesterday, I shall blush to see Mr. Martin, he will have reason to doubt the stability of womens resolutions.

“ Oh!

“ Oh ! as to that matter,” replied I, “ you may depend upon having your credit saved ; I shall inform him how very obstinate you have been, and what a difficult task your friends have had to compel you to be happy.”

Within another fortnight, my dear madam, we shall pay our respects to you and my father ; Mrs. Oswald will stay some time longer, as Lady Hartwill and her sister are expected in about three weeks.

We have been greatly surprised this day, by a letter from Mr. Oswald to his wife ; he proposes going abroad with Martin, for six or eight months ; Mrs. Oswald burst into tears ; her sister requested she would stay with her, and assured her Mr. Martin was a young man of such good principles, that she had nothing to fear from a connection between them, and as by that time her brother would be of age, they might settle comfortably in their own house

“ I fear,”

“ I fear,” replied Mrs. Oswald, “ you must think very slightly of me, for marrying a man so much younger than myself, and on so short an acquaintance ; I never indeed considered the impropriety of it in so strong a light, as since I have had the honour to know you ladies ; but I had been sacrificed by my parents, at a very early age, to a man old enough to be my grand-father ; and after his death I was in a manner besieged by his relations, and therefore was anxious to escape out of their hands : Mr. Oswald’s person and manners pleased me ; I saw he would soon be ruined by the company he was connected with, and having, by means of a friend, gained a knowledge of his circumstances and family, I own I encouraged, rather than depressed, his attentions to me. I hope, my dear ladies, if you think me reprehensible for marrying, you will have no cause to reproach me for my subsequent conduct, which shall be strictly conformable to English manners, and your examples shall be the objects of my imitation through life.”

We

We were exceedingly pleased with this little account Mrs. Oswald gave of herself, and warmly assured her of our esteem and friendship—I must break off, our beaux are below.

On my entrance into the drawing-room, I saw a stranger, a very elegant man, whom Captain Harley presented to me as Lord Trueby; I was surprised, though much pleased at seeing him. The death of an uncle, and an accession to a large estate, has brought him to England, which he designs to quit again very soon. By accident he fell into company with Mr. Oswald in town, and a gentleman present asked the former, if Captain Harley was down at Sir Charles Wentworth's; on being answered in the affirmative, Lord Trueby enquired if Captain Harley was lately come from abroad, and gaining the information he wished for, he set off yesterday morning for Wentworth Park, and was detained by its hospitable owners, and introduced to us this morning.

His

His Lordship is a most agreeable man, but there is an air of melancholy visible in his deportment, which to us who knew his story, interests one in his favour. Learning that Mr. Oswald and Martin were going to the continent, he politely offered himself as a companion, if acceptable to them, which we ladies took upon ourselves to answer would be highly so: and indeed I think his company will be a desirable acquisition to them in every respect. He appeared prodigiously struck with Mrs. Menville, and congratulated Harley in my hearing, on his prospect of happiness.

I must now dress, for we are going under their escort to dine at the Park. No temptations, no arguments can induce Madame Louisa to go beyond the environs of this house.

“No,” said she to me, yesterday, “no madam, I never can; I remember the solemn vow I made, of renouncing the world;
in

in a select society, such as visit the charming mistress of Grove-House, I conceive I violate no vow, but these walls must be my boundary, nor will I ever see company beyond them."

I own I admire the propriety of her resolution; adieu, my dear madam, for the present.

We returned from the Park too late last night, for me to resume my pen; we spent a most agreeable day, and had the addition of Lord Longfield's company. He had generosity enough to congratulate Harley, and has too much good sense, I dare say, to give way to sorrow, as he never had any hopes of success himself. As to Harley, you never saw such an alteration, he seems elevated beyond himself, yet his behaviour to Mrs. Menville is so distantly respectful, it is his eyes only that betray the secrets of his heart. I have this moment your second letter, my dear mother, and am delighted with

with its contents ; Colonel Huntley has offered himself to Mrs. Neville, and she has not *positively* refused him ; she behaves properly ; he is a worthy man, she will have a protector for her children, and I hope, in due time, will accept of him ; this will give great pleasure, I am sure, to my friend ; I hasten to communicate the news.

I am, ever, dear madam, your

obliged, grateful and affectionate

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MISS NEVILLE.

I Thank you, my beloved Miss Neville, for your obliging letter and congratulations. The persuasions of my friends, and the grateful affection I owe to Captain Harley, have induced me to recede from a resolution I had formed, never to give my hand a second time; having secured my dear Emily's fortune in such good hands, I have nothing to reproach myself with on her account, yet at times I am not satisfied, for I ever had a great

great aversion to second marriages, but I am told there are circumstances which render them not only excusable, but meritorious—perhaps we are easily persuaded, when reason appears to second the feelings of gratitude and esteem. I rejoice to hear of the eligible offer Mrs. Neville has received, and if her heart accords with Colonel Huntley's wishes, I shall be very happy to congratulate her. I am now, my dear Miss Neville, in the bosom of my friends; happy in the society of those I love, and though I look back sometimes on the days of sorrow I have past, yet the retrospection affords some useful lessons, which may influence my conduct for the remainder of my days. There are few things to be more guarded against, than improper female companions; an unprincipled woman may do a world of mischief, and possibly, if I had been candid enough to have owned my dislike of Miss Shepherd when I first married, none of my subsequent misfortunes might ever have happened. There ought not to be the least reserve or want of confidence

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confidence between man and wife; secrets on either side are sure to be productive of mischief and anguish. I now look forward to that peace and tranquillity, which has ever been my chief wish to procure; the tumultuous pleasures of the gay world had never any charms for me; I can partake of amusements, without being distracted after them; I love society, but not a crowd of persons I neither know nor care for; I like neatness and elegance of dress, but I hate finery; in short, as Lady Grace says,

“ I would never be drest out of the fashion, though never the first in it; ”

And I have no objection to enjoy every pleasure of life among my friends, “ soberly.” Happily situated as I am among those I love, possessed of a competency to the extent of my wishes, and blest with the approbation of those whose good opinions stamp me into consequence; I have only to be grateful for the blessings I enjoy, and deserve a continu-
ance

ance of them, by dispensing to the worthy and unfortunate a share of that property which is more than sufficient for all my wants, and can only afford me real happiness, when I reflect that Providence has given me both the will and the power to be serviceable to others, not equally fortunate with myself. Misfortunes and disappointments in our best wishes, my dear Miss Neville, though painful, are yet necessary monitors sometimes; they teach us to look within ourselves for the origin of them; they subdue unjustifiable pride, and destroy that vanity and presumption we females are but too apt to indulge; I speak from experience, since I must confess, if I have acquired patience under sufferings, wisdom and self-knowledge from adversity, and an enlarged heart from difficult situations, I ought to bless the hand of Providence for giving me those wholesome lessons, which alone can render my future life happy. Permit me to flatter myself, that if your amiable sister accepts, as I hope she will, the hand of Colonel Huntley,

ley, you will, *at least*, divide your time between us; to draw a charming friendly society about me, is my principal wish, and from domestic pleasures I hope to derive my future happiness. Mrs. Colemore will very shortly be with you, let me not envy her, but soon assure me in person that I possess your esteem and friendship. My affectionate compliments to Mrs. Neville, and believe me ever, my dear Miss Neville,

Your sincere and obliged friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER XXXIX.

[MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. ELLIS.]

YESTERDAY, my dear madam, we had a visit from Mr. Martin, in consequence of our letters to him and Mr. Oswald; they have seen Lord Longfield, and settled every thing relative to their intended tour, which takes place within a fortnight; Mr. Oswald returns here to-morrow; Martin behaved extremely well; I had half an hour's conversation with him before Mrs. Menville appeared; as he always supposed

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we should succeed in our wishes, he neither looked grieved nor disappointed, but said Mr. Oswald must be a comforter to Lord Longfield and myself, for I know his affection is little less than mine, but we both unite in our ardent wishes for the happiness of Mrs. Menville. He spent the day with us, but returned in the evening to town. Next Tuesday we shall set off for Sudbury, and hope to find you and my father in perfect health. Lady Hartwill and her sister are expected to-morrow; Mrs. Menville would not permit our departure until we had spent a few days with those worthy ladies; I am prepared to respect them for their affection to our friend. And now, my dear mother, I close up my correspondence from Grove-House, happy in the prospect which opens for the felicity of our dear and valued friends, and convinced, that even in this world, real merit, and the strict performance of our several duties, seldom fail of being rewarded; and that filial duty, gratitude, and self-denial, are virtues which evermore ob-

tains the esteem and admiration of the worthy part of mankind, and secure to us self-approbation, deprived of which, all the delusive pleasures of the world can never make us happy within ourselves, or respectable in the eyes of others.

I am ever, my dear madam,
your obliged and affectionate daughter,

E. M. COLEMORE.

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CONCLUSION.

WITHIN the limited time, Mrs. Menville had promised her hand to Captain Harley; he received the blessing so earnestly coveted, from the hands of Sir Charles Wentworth, to the infinite satisfaction of their mutual friends; Mrs. Menville found in his ardent affection and respectful attentions, that happiness she had so long sought for in vain; a happiness which neither time nor accidents could diminish, because founded on acknowledged merits, and those amiable virtues which received strength and permanency from practice, and a solicitude to render others as blest as themselves. They had two children, and lived to see them, and the lovely Emily Menville happily settled;

Sir

Sir Charles and Lady Wentworth, Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, and their other connexions, ever preserved an uninterrupted friendship. Mrs. Neville was married to Colonel Huntley, and Miss Neville having too much delicacy to accept of the several offers made her, divided her time alternately among her friends.

Lord Longfield, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ofwald returned from their tour, the two former perfectly cured of their passion; his Lordship soon after married Lady Hartwill, whose many aimable qualities greatly overbalanced five or six years difference in their ages. Mr. Martin remained unmarried, but cultivated and obtained the esteem of all his friends. Mr. Ofwald was, by the example before him, cured of his follies, and made his wife happy. What became of Mrs. Thurkill, was never known, but we may, without a breach of charity, suppose her vices rendered her a despicable object, and the end of her life (without repentance)

must have been poverty, contempt and misery. Her mother was foolish enough, on her return to England, to bestow herself and fortune on a dissipated young man, not worth a shilling.

The Ossuana family kept up a constant correspondence with Captain Harley, and rejoiced in his friendship; the lovely Antonia gave her hand to the Duke de Solis, and by so doing, made her friends happy as well as herself. She wrote a letter of congratulation to Lady Wentworth, on Mrs. Menville's marriage, which was highly gratifying to all parties. Thus, by a strict rectitude of principle, by the observance of every moral obligation, and every practical virtue, the dutiful daughter, the affectionate sister, the sincere friend, and the obedient faithful wife, was at length rewarded for the performance of her several duties, by being united to a worthy man, whose whole study through life, was to make her happy.

F I N I S.

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